

Governmental Policies in Handling and Stopping the Covid-19 Pandemic (The Case of Langsa City in 2020)

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to explore the Langsa City's policies as its responses to the wide spreading pandemic Covid-19 virus that threatened the well-being of the people in eastern part of Aceh. Langsa city is the gate of Aceh province that directly connected to the Province of North Sumatra, a province that considered as the core city of the economic development of Sumatra Island. Accordingly, it is assumed that due to closeness to Medan the Capital of latter, Langsa has to formulate a more comprehensive policies that aimed to curbed the spreading of the virus into the region. It is therefore, exploration of the effectiveness of the policies has become the concerned of this study. In so doing, this paper has applied a qualitative approach in collecting and analyzing the date. So that the phenomenon could be explain naturally, as it was perceived by the people of the Langsa and its government. It is found that the Langsa City has implemented policies that based on regulations issued from the central government and followed by the rules of the Governor of Aceh. In addition to that, the response of the people in Langsa had not been unanimous. They have been divided into two group, those who are convinced in the pandemic and those who were not. Besides, the city government has to be alert with the religious wise issue, as the policies closely related to the religious aspect such prayer congregational in the Most.

Keywords: Langsa City, Task Force Team, Policies, Covid-19 and PSBB

1. INTRODUCTION

This article tries to evaluate the implementation of the local government policy in response to the multi-faceted impacts of the pandemic of Covid-19, in the community of the Langsa City, one of the most developed municipalities in the province of Aceh. It has become one of the most visited city for tourism industry, particularly for its success in rehabilitation of the Mangrove Forestry (Taman Hutan Mangrove) and the conservation of protected rain forest that is popularly known as The Garden of City Forest (Taman Hutan Kota).

The Langsa City is not natural resources rich city. It does not have any natural resources like other city, Lhokseumawe. The local government has to find alternative way to feed her population. It has Seaport (Kuala Langsa) which could be the entry port for local export-import whether local, national and international based.

Before the Pandemic, Langsa is considered as the most rapid developed city in the Province of Aceh. It has won several recognitions from the central government for its cleanliness, fascination, land and natural preservation. It has been known as the city that has never sleep. Many travelers across the region preferred to stop for a break in Langsa. It has open opportunity for the people in Langsa to do small to large business.

However, when the pandemic hit the city, the conditions were totally changed. It was began with the detection of the first suspected patient with covid-19 in June 26, 2020, the whole city were shocked. The patient was registered in the eastern Langsa Sub-district and his daily activities was a vendor in the local traditional Market. Then followed by another case of a patient, from Chinese ethnicity, who was also vendor in the city. Since the patients were admitted to the local Community Health Center (Puskesmas) in Langsa, 15 health officers who were on duty that day were order to home isolation, it was because of their contact with the patient. <https://aceh.tribunnews.com/2020/07/02/>)

The story went on and rumors on the pandemic was spreading so quickly. At the beginning, people were cautious and well aware of the danger of the virus. People were hunting for sanitizer and maskers. Due to the scarcity of product, the rule of supply-demand has triggered the price increase and panic within the society. The panic becoming worse, following the death of senior medical doctor in Langsa, who was diagnosed covid-19 positive; and 31 to 67 doctors and nurses were tested positive reactive and that urged the City General Hospital Director to closed several wards and imposed covid-19 test on every patient prior admission to the hospital (<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/09/24/14343261/>).

Responding to the wide spread pandemic, the City Hall officially form a Covid-19 Rapid Response Team

and the City Secretary was appointed to lead the Team. This team was form to play an important role in formulating strategies to fight the pandemic and at least to educate the people so that they would provide full support for the implementation of the local government policies in minimizing the effects of the pandemic on the livelihood of the people. Accordingly, this paper would explore the implementation of the policy and the support that the people gave to the government. In so doing this paper would be divided into several parts: part one is introduction, part two is theory or model onimplementation of polcies, then follows with the method of data collection and finally is a concluding remark.

1.1. The Implementation Policies.

Discussing about the implementation of policies as local government response to the control the pandemic, the former has to follow the guidance revealed by the central government in Jakarta. The central government in Jakarta had developed several strategies to control the widespread of the pandemic and also to provide quick response to the any negative effects of the pandemic on the community at large (Budi, 2012).

Firstly, March 31st, 2020, President Issued, Government Regulation No. 1/ 2020, on monetary policy to control the covid-19 pandemic, with total 405.1 Billions Rupiah. Secondly, April 3th, 2020, President issued, President Regulation No.45/ 2020, on the detail allocation of National Budget. Some ministries' budget were cut up to 97, 42 Billions Rupiah and reallocated to other strategic ministries, such as, Education and Culture received an increase of revenue from 36 – 70 Billions and the Health Ministry has increased from 57-76 Billions Rupiah. Thirdy, August 26th, 2021, Ministry of Finance proposed for an increased of fund free vaccines from 35 up to 36 Billions Rupiah in the 2022 National Budget.

In respect to social condition the central government has allocated:

- a. Logistics and basin need support 25 Billions;
- b. Family Hope Program (Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) 10 Millions Rupiah;
- c. Basic Needs Card (ATM) for 20 millions family; 200.000 monthly;
- d. Pre-work Card (Kartu Pra-Kerja), 20 Billions rupiah that covers 5.6 informal workers and small vendors;
- e. Free electric power for 24 millions beneficiaries of the 450VA and subsidies for 7 million beneficiaries of the 900VA.;
- f. House Incentive for building houses for low income citizen, up to 175.000 houses.

With respect to control the widespread of the pandemic the government had restricted community big scale social activities. Such as the closing of schools and

public working places, including limiting the social-religious and cultural activities or any kind of social activities that could gather big number of people. The policies was popularly known as Restriction of Bigger Scale Social Activities (Pembatasan Sosial Skala Besar (PSBB) (Yuliana, 2020).

Since the central government has implement that policy the whole country had to implement it, Langsa with no exception.

The City Hall then established the Langsa Rapid Pandemic Response Team, then a Covid-19 Voluntary Team was also formed by some voluntaries that composed of academician, social workers, medical doctor and students of the local Univeristies. (Nur Rohim and Annissa 2020)

Despites of fiscal and moneytary policy, such budget refocusing, when many government physic developmental projects have to be stop, the fund were realocated for the Pandemic response, the policy that realdy affected the community is the PSBB, as people was not allow to move, interact and gather freely in the public places. Markets were close and pun under the policy watch. Shopes and cafes were subjected to curvew and they can only operate from 08:00 Am to 10:00 PM. The PSBB did affect the economic and social life of the people with the community.

Consistency and closed supervision are very important to ensure the success of the policy implementation. For instance the enforcement of the WHO health Protection Standard Procedure. People should keep distance in public places, wearing mask and washing hand.

However, due to the lack of well plan strategies and team coordination, the City Hall of Langsa was shock the rise of the covid-19 positive reactive patient cases.

The process of good governance in a policy becomes an indicator of the success of its implementation. Marzali views that policy is a blueprint for actions that lead to and influence the behavior of the many people affected by the decision. Policies are deliberately structured and designed to make the behavior of the intended crowd (target group) become patterned in accordance with the sound and formulation of the policy. (Amri, 2012) Jenkins is quoted by Wahab as describing public policy as a decision, then public policy as a series of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or a group of actors, with regard to the objectives that have been chosen and how to achieve them in a situation. Those decisions are in principle still within the limits of the authority of the actor's power (Wahab, 2014:15).

The following were several studies on the policy implementation.

Harirah and Rizaldi on the reason of the country's policy in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia in the increasing positive cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia brings serious problems. The prevalence of the spread of the Covid-19 virus has touched all levels of society from teenagers to the elderly.

The Indonesian government has taken several policies such as limiting the people activities and Work From Home (WFH), rapid tests en masse, provide social assistance, issue appeals to do Social distancing and Physical distancing to large-scale social application (PSBB). Until now the government has not been willing to take a policy for Lockdown as has been imposed by other countries. This policy is of course taken for special reasons, one of which is taking into account the economic impact for people with small income levels. This shows that the policies taken by the government show rational reason (Haira and Rizaldi, 2020).

In addition on the collaborative governance in public policy from the perspektive handling of Covid-19. DKI Jakarta illustrate the urgency of collaboration between the central government and the region in its handling. The results of discussions between the agencies involved decided on effective measures to control the spread of Covid-19 in Jakarta, by issuing (Gubernur DKI Jakarta Letter of Instrctution Number 6 Yearr 2020) about the temporary close of office activities in order to stop the spread of the coronavirus outbreak. The Governor of DKI Jakarta on March 20, 2020 stated that the status of the letter was in the form of a call, but confirmed that stopping office and other activities can be done at the Planning Collaborative Actions (Option Phase) at the Agency or policy builder stage and draw up a plan for implementation by mapping the zones of the affected areas in the five administrative cities of DKI Jakarta (Rivelino and Ginting, 2020).

Overall, at the three stages of the collaborative government process in handling Covid-19 disease in Jakarta there are five criteria for the success of a network or collaboration in governance that have been fulfilled, namely Networked Structure, Commitment to a Common Purpose, Distributive Accountability/Responsibility, Information Sharing, dan Access to Authority.

This shows that the collaborative government process in DKI Jakarta in handling covid-19 has not been fully optimal and effective.

Furthermore, in the Journal Analyzed the Lokcdown Enforcement Policy in Anticipation of the Spread of Corona Virus Covid-19 which illustrates that in 2020 it gave rise to a pandemic that worried the world including Indonesia. Initially the government did not follow the method used by several other countries related to the information provided about the coronavirus covid-19, namely by doing a quick reaction of preventive

socialization. The cause, so that the people of Indonesia are not worried about worrying issues, in addition to minimizing the existence of hoax news from a handful of irresponsible people. But Indonesia is already worried for the community so that the Lockdown policy is needed as an effort to break the eye for the spread of corona covid-19 (Nur Rohim and Annessa 2020).

Ayuningtyas further described that public policy is whatever the government chooses to do or not do. Policy is a concept, not a specific or concrete phenomenon, so that its definition will experience obstacles or not easily. Policies will be much more useful when viewed as a guide to action or a series of decisions or decisions that are interconnected with each other (Dwi, 2014)

Agustino the argued that policy is a series of actions or activities proposed by a person, group, or government in a particular environment where there are obstacles (difficulties) and possibilities (opportunities) where the policy is Proposed to be useful in overcoming it to achieve the intended goal (Agustino, 2017).

Syafiie then explained that government is a science and art, said to be a discipline because government has met the requirements of science such as can be studied and taught, has objects both material and formal, universal and systematic and specific (Syafeii, 2011:8) While Manan describes that government is as a tool for the completeness of the state can be interpreted broadly and in a narrow sense. Government in the broadest sense includes all state fittings, which occur from the branches of executive, legislative and judicial power or the fittings of other states acting for and on behalf of the state. While the government in a narrow sense can be interpreted as a stakeholder as executive implementer or more importantly, the government as the organizer of state administration (Manan, 2013:161).

In similar strads, Halim is of the view that the government is the apparatus responsible for running the wheels of government, community development, and service to the community. In addition, the government is responsible for delivering its performance report as a form of achievement that has been done during the current period. (Akbar, 2012:38) it is understood that the government is a legal institution and formal in carrying out objectives and expectations and responsible to the state in the administration of government.

2. METHODS

The type of research used in this study is qualitatively generating descriptive data analysis in the form of written or oral words from people and observed behaviors, (Moleong, 2018) This type of qualitative research uses methods of qualitative-descriptive analysis, as well as exploratory qualitative. The approach is used to analyze the Governance of Government Policy in Handling and Countering the Covid-19 Pandemic Case Study of the Langsa City Government in 2020, and reviewed from inhibiting and

supporting factors such as available resources, communication between stakeholders, implementor attitudes towards programs and environmental conditions related to social, economic and political conditions. based on facts by presenting social phenomena in the field in full according to the aspects examined.

The analysis is carried out by linking theories and phenomenon to obtain conclusions and recommendations on how to manage the covid-19 pandemic, in the case of Langsa City in 2020. The reason for the use of qualitatively methods is due to the research design that is to explore the experience of the Langsa City in handling and stopping the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

3. RESULTS

The City government is trying to improve the strategies handling pandemic; and it is based on the Presidential Instruction No. 6 of 2020 on improving discipline and health enforcement in the prevention and control of Corona Virus Disease 2019. The Covid 19 data in Langsa City is as follows:

Tabel 1 Data Covid 19 Kota Langsa

No	Confirmed	recovered	dead	Aktive
1	1157	1062	95	2
2	94,9 %	91,8%	7,3%	1,4%

The data illustrates that the spread of Covid 19 in Langsa City in 2020 cannot be ignored.

The City seeks to enforce PSBB to control the spread of the Covid 19. The role of the Task Force Team to accelerate the handling of the Covid 19 pandemic is paramount important. The impact felt by this community also needs to be anticipated by the government. The community at the time of the enactment of PSBB is very difficult in making a living, especially people who depend heir lives on small businesses.

People become very anxious about their financial condition, especially those of small and medium business. Life difficulties make people in city ignore the policies carried out by the government. Many had not observed health protocols, what is more when they in the mosque performing five time prayers and the Friday prayer. The Task Force Team and the *Satpol PP* carry out the enforcement of the rule PSBB and Health Protocole Procedure

The pattern of enforcement carried out by the Langsa City government is very persuasive but measurable so as not to harm the community who do not abide by the rules about discipline and the application of health protocols such as washing hands, wearing masks and maintaining a safe distance. The process of implementing the policy begin with socialization that is to inform the public about the dangers of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The action taken against violations of rules starts from mild action such as remind and warning letter up to heavy fine and closing of the premises temporarily.

In August to September, as in other part of the country, the people in Langsa also received life support in the form of cash money from the Minister of Villages, and rural development, as an effort to help sustain the economy of the communities

The city government's policy in dealing with and tackling the Covid 19 pandemic does not always run according to procedure and effective. The people considered the city rules such as PSBB and Night Curfew, that any activities at night should be ended at 22.00 hours, are irrational. People enchanted the Covid-19 only came after 22.00 hours.

Facts on the ground illustrate that the public considers the Covid 19 pandemic to be unproven and some believe Covid 19 is a virus that is not deadly. This makes the government have to work extra in updating data in the current Covid 19 pandemic conditions.

3. CONCLUSION

To conclude that the implementation of policies to control the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has yet been effective. The City Government with the help of Task Force Team have provided enough socialization to make the public aware and understand the danger of the pandemic. However, one of the factors that make the policy less effective was due to the lack of coordination between the Task force Team and the Voluntary Covid-19 Team.

The City Government immediately carried out concrete stages and steps. The sanctions given by the City government vary very lightly and heavily depending on the violation. The obstacle faced by the Covid 19 Task Force Team is that many residents have not complied with the rules that have been imposed by the City government. Although socialization has been given, the process that occurs in the field is very inappropriate because of the violation of health protocols that continue to occur. Furthermore, regulations related to health protocols are also constrained in technical matters where the early potential of the Covid 19 pandemic is not fully carried out by the community. In addition to that, based on the report from the Financial Inspection Body (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan/BPK) that the City Government has been not effective in handling the covid-19 pandemic. It does not have Operating Plans that describe the strategies and technique of how the pandemic should be handled comprehensively.

The body then recommended the city government to command the Task Force Team to revise its Operating Plans that would include the strategies and technique of handling the pandemic: testing, tracing, treatment and educating- socialization. It also commands the head of Health Bureau play active role in providing laboratory specimen test 3 X 24 hours. The Bureau

should actively monitor the process of individual isolation of the patient with covid-19 positive together with the general hospital in the city.

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