

THE AGRARIAN POVERTY PARADOX AND GOVERNANCE FRAGILITY: EVALUATING RURAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER DECENTRALIZED OVERSIGHT

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to: 1) Evaluate the effectiveness and targeting accuracy of the government's social assistance program in Sukma Village, Botupingge District, Bone Bolango Regency; 2) Analyze the coordination and oversight dynamics between the Village Government and the Village Representative Body (BPD); and 3) Identify the administrative and sociological factors hindering the program from reducing poverty rates. This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design. Data were collected through field observations, documentation, and structured interviews with key informants (Village Head, Village Secretary, BPD, Hamlet Rulers, and farming households). The results indicate that the implementation of the social assistance program in Sukma Village is currently suboptimal, facing a profound socio-economic poverty paradox. This ineffectiveness is driven by rigid, macro-level national poverty indicators that fail to match the volatile economic realities of corn and bean farmers. Institutionally, the functional shift of the BPD from an independent watchdog into an advisory partner has weakened the local system of checks and balances, reducing the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) verification into a mere administrative formality. Furthermore, acute digital infrastructure deficits (only 3 laptops available) and a deeply embedded dependency mindset among residents—who view aid as a permanent subsidy act as primary barriers stalling rural economic independence. The findings suggest that a shift toward rights-based participatory governance and comprehensive village data digitalization is required to optimize targeting efficiency.

Keywords : Social Assistance, Poverty Paradox, BPD Oversight, Village Governance, Dependency Mindset.

INTRODUCTION

Social assistance programs represent a fundamental pillar in global development strategies aimed at alleviating poverty and improving the standard of living for vulnerable populations in rural areas. In various developing nations, these policy interventions are designed as social safety net instruments to reduce economic inequality and provide protection against financial shocks [1]. Ideally, social assistance programs initiated by the central government should be capable of distributing resources equitably and fairly to foster sustainable economic independence at the local level. However, the effectiveness of achieving these targets heavily depends on the consistency of the bureaucratic chain, spanning from national

policy formulation down to real execution at the grassroots level.

Although social assistance policies are designed with ideal objectives, their implementation in the field is frequently confronted with complex public administration realities. Governance challenges, such as weak institutional capacity, low inter-agency coordination, and limited data collection capabilities, often exacerbate inefficiencies in aid distribution [2]. Across Asia, these governance flaws potentially trigger budget allocation biases, where programs intended for the poor frequently end up benefiting higher socio-economic groups due to local political intervention or bureaucratic distortions [3]. Consequently, the effectiveness of public

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administration at the sub-district and village levels becomes one of the most critical turning points in determining the success or failure of a program.

In a more specific scope, Sukma Village in the Botupingge District of Bone Bolango Regency is a developing area established through a village expansion (division) in 2009, covering a geographical area of ±50 hectares divided into three hamlets. With a relatively small population consisting of 328 residents from 103 Head of Families (HF), the village exhibits a homogenous sociological characteristic where the majority of the population relies on the agriculture and plantation sectors, particularly corn and bean commodities. On the other hand, as a developing village, Sukma Village still faces limitations in public service governance infrastructure, which indirectly affects the mobility and responsiveness of village apparatuses in executing national social safety net programs.

The fundamental problem found in Sukma Village is the paradox between the natural resource potential in the agricultural sector and the actual welfare level of the community. Despite the exceptionally high percentage of agricultural livelihoods and available farmland, field reality proves that the agricultural area does not serve as a benchmark for the population's welfare, as the number of poor heads of families in Sukma Village has failed to decrease. This stagnation in poverty rates triggers a crucial question regarding the extent of the effectiveness and contribution of the social assistance programs implemented by the government in the village,

and whether the aid has been accurately targeted to generate a significant economic impact on the community.

In addition to the economic problem, there is an institutional gap (*research gap*) that has been under-explored in previous literature, namely the dynamics of oversight and partnership within the village government following regulatory shifts. In Sukma Village, the existence of the Village Representative Body (BPD), which is constitutionally mandated to function as a representative oversight body for the community, has undergone a functional shift to operate merely as an advisory body or administrative partner under regional regulations. This shift in the BPD's role from oversight to an advisory function potentially weakens the *checks and balances* system at the village level, particularly in monitoring the transparency of poverty data updates and social assistance distribution to avoid inclusion and exclusion errors.

Evaluating the effectiveness of social assistance specifically at the village level is critical because data validity is an absolute prerequisite for a sound and scientific final project report. Through a case-based assessment at a micro-scale (103 HF), researchers can precisely identify the administrative constraints faced by the Sukma Village apparatus including the Village Head, Secretary, and Section Rulers in managing aid. Furthermore, this evaluation is vital to align the village's medium-term development plan (RPJMDes) so that social assistance does not merely serve as short-term consumptive

stimulus but rather as a catalyst to strengthen the human resources of local farmers [4].

Responding to the gaps and problems outlined above, the objective of this study is to analyze and evaluate in depth the effectiveness of the implementation of social assistance programs in Sukma Village, Botupingge District, Bone Bolango Regency. More specifically, this research is directed to evaluate the target accuracy of aid distribution amidst the stagnation of farmers' poverty rates, analyze the role and limitations of the partnership between the village government and the BPD in program oversight, and formulate strategic recommendations to improve human resource capacity and social assistance program governance to accelerate poverty alleviation in the village.

To achieve the aforementioned research objectives, the focus of this study is formulated through the following research questions:

1. How is the effectiveness of the implementation of the government's social assistance program in Sukma Village, Botupingge District, Bone Bolango Regency, when evaluated from the aspect of target accuracy for poor farming families?
2. How are the role and coordination functions between the Sukma Village Government and the Village Representative Body (BPD) in overseeing the execution and data validity of social assistance program recipients?
3. What administrative and sociological factors act as barriers to the implementation of the social assistance

program, preventing it from successfully reducing the number of poor heads of families in Sukma Village?

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design, Spatial Context, and Timeline

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design to capture an in-depth, nuanced understanding of social assistance implementation within a bounded system. The spatial focus of this research is strictly anchored in Sukma Village, Botupingge District, Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province. This micro-locus (± 50 hectares, 103 farming households) serves as an ideal analytical laboratory due to its unique socio-economic paradox: persistent poverty rates despite exceptionally high yields in corn and bean commodities. Fieldwork, including direct administrative immersion, participant observation, and stakeholder interviews, was systematically conducted over a period 2023.

Informant Selection and Data Sources

Primary data were gathered using a purposive sampling technique to select key informants who possess direct administrative authority, oversight responsibilities, or lived experiences regarding the village's social safety nets. The sample size was bounded by the principle of data saturation, reaching a total of 7 key informant codes across institutional and grassroots levels. The operational scope and selection rationale for these informants are structured in Table 1.

Table 1 List of Key Informants

No	Informant Code	Position / Role	Rationale for Selection (Data Scope)
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1.	KI-01	Village Head (Kepala Desa)	The primary policymaker and person-in-charge of all social assistance program approvals and distribution strategies in Sukma Village.
2.	KI-02	Village Secretary (Sekretaris Desa)	The chief administrative officer responsible for village data verification, coordination, and managing the official village archives/profiles.
3.	KI-03	Head of Welfare Section (Kasi Pelayanan & Kesejahteraan)	The technical executor who directly handles the registration, logistical distribution, and field execution of social safety net programs.
4.	KI-04	Head of Finance Section (Kaur Keuangan)	Responsible for financial reporting, budgeting allocation, and tracking funds related to local village social aid.
5.	KI-05	Representative of the Village Representative Body (BPD)	Provides insights into the institutional oversight, partnership dynamics, and advisory challenges with the village executive body.
6.	KI-06	Hamlet Rulers (Kepala Dusun)	The grassroots officials who know the exact socio-economic conditions of the 103 families (HF) and experience field-level targeting challenges.
7.	KI-07	Beneficiary Communities (Poor Farming Households)	To evaluate the real impact, satisfaction, and target accuracy directly from the perspective of corn and bean farmers receiving the aid.

Operational Data Collection and Triangulation

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To prevent subjective fabrication and eliminate reporting bias, data collection was operationalized through a rigorous methodological triangulation framework consisting of three synchronous lines of inquiry:

1. Field Observation: Non-obtrusive, active tracking was maintained within the Sukma Village office to evaluate daily database update workflows, digital portal entries, and operational hardware limits. Physical infrastructure distribution runs across the three hamlets were observed to map logistical constraints.
2. Semi-Structured Interviews: Face-to-face, interactive dialogues were executed using an adaptive interview guide. Questions were specifically engineered to uncover technical friction in central indicator matching, BPD structural oversight limitations, and the community's behavioral response during recipient graduation meetings.
3. Documentary Audits: Secondary validation was achieved by extracting quantitative metrics from the *Sukma Village Profile (2020)*, Medium-Term Development Plans (*RPJMDes*), official *Musdes* minutes, and photographic logs documenting the physical distribution chain.

Qualitative Data Analysis Chain

Following collection, the qualitative data were processed using the interactive data analysis model formalized by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña [5]. This framework operates through a continuous, four-stage cyclical process:

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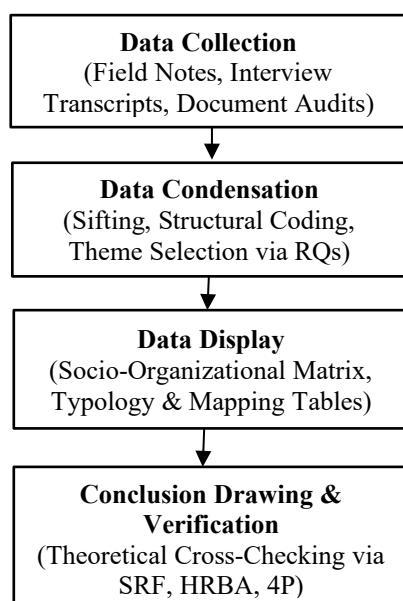


Figure 1 Qualitative Data Analysis Chain Model (Adapted from Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014)

Data Condensation: Raw field notes and audio transcripts were transcribed verbatim and condensed. Unnecessary narratives were filtered out using structural coding based on the three core themes: targeting accuracy mismatches, institutional BPD shifts, and infrastructure-dependency bottlenecks.

Data Display: Condensing code matrices were transformed into structured text displays, socio-organizational flowcharts, and cross-reference typology tables to map out exactly how specific administrative variables drive the poverty paradox.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Initial patterns were continuously verified through cross-informant check balances (e.g., matching the Village Head's claims with the farming community's ground reality). Final conclusions were robustly validated by anchoring the empirical findings into the

Social Relations Framework, Transaction Costs Theory, and the Livelihood Capital Framework to ensure high-level theoretical generalizability.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Data is a fundamental component in the preparation of this study. The data presented below represents authentic field realities gathered during the internship period through triangulation methods, ensuring its validity. To contextualize the effectiveness of the social assistance program, the following sections present the factual profile of Sukma Village integrated directly with the qualitative analysis to address the established research questions.

General Profile and Geographic Context of Sukma Village

Sukma Village was officially established as a preparatory village on Tuesday, December 15, 2009, under the leadership of its first village official, Mr. Saleh Yusuf. The village was born from the strategic division (expansion) of cross-regional territories bridging the Kabila and Botupingge Districts. Specifically, it unified communities from Dusun III and Hamlet I of Luwohu and Buata Village (Botupingge) with Tumbihe and Oluhuta Village (Kabila) across the Bone River. The definitive status was subsequently approved by the Regency DPRD.

Currently, Sukma Village covers a geographical area of ± 50 hectares. Structurally, the village is partitioned into three distinct administrative regions (hamlets) bounded by Tumbihe and Oluhuta Village in

the north, Luwohu Village in the east, and Buata Village in both the south and west.

Target Accuracy and the Pverty Paradox

The population distribution across the three hamlets of Sukma Village provides an essential baseline for measuring the target accuracy of social safety nets. Based on the 2020 Village Profile, the demographic breakdown is structured as follows:

Table 2 Population Distribution of Sukma Village (2020)

Administrative Region	Male Population	Female Population	Total Residents	Total Head of Families (HF)
District 1 (Dusun I)	36	51	87 Souls	—
District 2 (Dusun II)	64	53	117 Souls	—
District 3 (Dusun III)	66	58	124 Souls	—
TOTAL	166 People	163 People	328 People	103 Families

Source: Sukma Village Profile (2020)

Sukma Village is fundamentally characterized as an agricultural community, where the vast majority of the 103 Head of Families (HF) earn their living as farmers, with corn and beans serving as the primary economic commodities. However, the quantitative data reveals a profound socio-economic paradox: *the extensive agricultural land area does not automatically serve as a benchmark for the population's welfare.* Despite high agricultural productivity, the baseline records show that the number of poor heads of families in Sukma Village has failed to decrease.

This target accuracy issue is further elaborated by field testimonies, which reveal that while national social assistance programs arrive regularly, the rigid criteria set by the central government often fail to match the volatile socio-economic landscape of rural farmers. The Village Head highlighted this core mismatch regarding indicators:

"The main problem with target accuracy is that the poverty indicators are determined from the central government, which often don't fit our local realities. A farmer might have a wide patch of cornfield, but it is entirely leased or heavily hit by seasonal price drops. On paper, they look wealthy because of the land size, but their actual disposable income is below the poverty line. This mismatch leads to inclusion and exclusion errors." (Informant KI-01, 2023).

Furthermore, the perspective from the grassroots community emphasized the lack of adaptive targeting during market and climate shocks:

"We harvest corn twice a year, but when the market price crashes or fertilizer costs double, we lose all our capital. The social aid helps us buy food for a few weeks, but it doesn't change our situation because the next season we are broke again. Some families who are better off still receive aid just because their names were registered years ago and never changed." (Informant KI-07, 2023).

Institutional Shifts and Oversight Vulnerabilities

The administration of Sukma Village has maintained political stability, led continuously by Mr. Saleh Yusuf, S.AP, from its inception in 2009 through the democratic elections in 2018 (serving the 2019–2024 period). The executive implementation of village programs is managed by a structured apparatus consisting of the Village Chairman, Secretary, Section Rulers (Kaur/Kasi), Section of Tranquility and Services, Business Design and Planning Section of Development, Rural Financial Section, and Environmental Section.

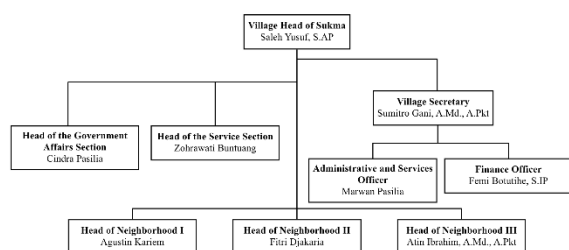


Figure 2 Governance Organization Structure Government (GOSG)

Source: Sukma Village Profile (2020)

An important institutional shift occurred regarding the co-organizers of village management. The Village Representative Body (BPD), which was constitutionally designed to function as an independent, representative *oversight* body for the community, has experienced a functional transformation. Under the regulatory framework of Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning regional governance, the BPD in Sukma Village has shifted into an *advisory body* and administrative partner rather than an aggressive watchdog.

Interviews confirmed that this transition has heavily minimized its objective watchdog function, particularly in auditing social

assistance recipient lists. The representative of the BPD admitted the limitations of their current institutional reach:

"Since our role shifted from a legislative representative body to an advisory council, our capacity to cross-check and audit the social aid distribution has softened. We operate more as administrative partners now. We assist the Village Head in reviewing the Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes), but when it comes to aggressively auditing why family X received aid and family Y did not, we lack the structural teeth to enforce changes. We can only give recommendations." (Informant KI-05, 2023).

This structural dynamic is synchronized with the technical explanation provided by the Village Secretary regarding the limitations of the local verification process:

"We maintain a harmonious relationship with the BPD, but the verification of the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) is heavily reliant on our internal staff. Because the BPD functions as a partner rather than an external auditor, the data evaluation meetings (Musdes) tend to be a formality to agree on existing lists rather than a rigorous, critical review of who is truly poor." (Informant KI-02, 2023).

Administrative and Sociological Barriers to Success

The capacity of the village government to effectively execute, monitor, and distribute social assistance programs is heavily bounded

by its available public and administrative infrastructure. The structural assets registered in the village profile are detailed below:

Table 3 Public and Governance Infrastructure of Sukma Village (2020)

No	Type of Support / Asset	Quantity	Functional Role in Program Delivery
1	Office Building	1 Unit	Primary hub for social aid data management and registration.
2	PKBM Village Hall	1 Unit	Public gathering point for community coordination/aid briefing.
3	Village Polindes	1 Unit	Local healthcare post.
4	PAUD Building	1 Unit	Early childhood education facility.
5	Places of Worship	1 Unit	Community spiritual center.
6	Solar Panels	3 Units	Alternative energy support for rural electricity gaps.
7	Public Bathrooms (MCK)	7 Units	Basic sanitation infrastructure.
8	Department Motor Vehicle	1 Unit	Operational transport for distributing aid across 3 hamlets.
9	Fan	2 Units	Office comfort equipment.
10	Laptop	3 Units	Core digital assets for processing valid assistance data.

Source: Sukma Village Profile (2020)

The final research focus mapped out how these severe logistical constraints combine with deep-rooted sociological dependencies to prevent social assistance from successfully acting as a catalyst for long-term poverty reduction. The Head of the Welfare Section explained the physical limitations of

managing the database with limited digital assets:

"As the technical executor, I am overwhelmed by the lack of administrative infrastructure. We only have three laptops for the entire office. When we need to input, update, and upload hundreds of citizen metrics into the government's online portal, the system lags, or we have to share digital devices. Additionally, distributing physical aid across 50 hectares with only one official motorcycle means that delivery is slow, and field monitoring is rarely done thoroughly." (Informant KI-03, 2023).

From a sociological standpoint, these technological bottlenecks are worsened by local cultural barriers regarding community dependency and social stigma. The Hamlet Rulers noted that social assistance often functions as an economic crutch rather than an empowerment tool:

"There is a deep-rooted mind-set among some residents where social aid is viewed as a permanent subsidy rather than temporary relief. When we try to graduate a family out of the assistance list because their income improved slightly, it creates intense social friction and complaints. People would rather underreport their farming yields just to stay on the assistance roster, which directly stunts the human resource acceleration we want to achieve." (Informant KI-06, 2023).

DISCUSSION

Target Accuracy and the Poverty Paradox

The analysis of social assistance implementation in Sukma Village reveals a persistent socioeconomic paradox: despite high agricultural productivity in corn and bean commodities, the local poverty rate fails to experience a meaningful decline. The findings indicate that this stagnation is primarily rooted in a structural mismatch between macro-level national poverty indicators and the highly volatile micro-level realities of rural farmers. While the central government uses rigid asset-based and land-size parameters, it systematically overlooks agricultural vulnerabilities, such as land-leasing dependencies, soaring fertilizer costs, and seasonal market price crashes that plunge nominally "land-rich" farmers below the actual disposable income poverty line. Consequently, this data rigidity creates systemic targeting errors, where affluent families remain on stagnant recipient registries due to outdated databases, while truly vulnerable farmers facing immediate economic shocks suffer from exclusion errors. Social aid in Sukma Village functions merely as a temporary, short-term survival subsidy rather than a transformative economic catalyst, leaving the core structural roots of rural poverty completely unaddressed.

This rural reality aligns with broader international public policy documentation regarding the "poverty paradox" within agricultural economies, where food-producing sectors and regions consistently harbor disproportionately high poverty rates. According to Bonnal et al., this paradox is heavily driven by deep heterogeneity in

agricultural performance, unequal institutional environments, and asymmetric power dynamics within developing countries [6]. In the context of Sukma Village, this heterogeneity manifests when macro-policies treat all agricultural households as a homogeneous block, ignoring the distinction between land owners and vulnerable tenant farmers. As a result, standard social protection nets fail to insulate rural producers from localized market shocks, rendering the high volume of crop yields irrelevant to actual household welfare progression.

Furthermore, empirical evidence demonstrates that short-term consumption-focused aid programs cannot compensate for deep-seated deficiencies in local human resources and economic acceleration. Bindarto et al. emphasize that direct non-cash food assistance often yields limited long-term effectiveness in reducing systemic poverty compared to integrated education and targeted structural village funds [7]. This is highly synchronized with the findings in Sukma Village, where social protection operates in isolation from the farmers' broader economic ecosystem. When government interventions are restricted to temporary relief without stabilizing input costs such as fertilizers or managing crop price volatility, the state merely delays poverty symptoms rather than curing them, a phenomenon Lei and Shaohong describe as a failure of labor and economic transfers to address underlying productivity structures [8].

To systematically unpack these targeting errors and socio-agricultural inequalities, the Social Relations Framework (SRF) and the

Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) offer critical theoretical explanations. Applied to Sukma Village, the SRF reveals how local institutional dynamics and rigid central indicators intersect to institutionalize inequalities, effectively blocking vulnerable, asset-poor tenant farmers from access to state assistance [9]. Simultaneously, an HRBA lens highlights that the village's current data verification model lacks rights-based targeting and adaptive monitoring mechanisms. Without incorporating localized economic rights into the eligibility criteria such as actual net disposable income under market shocks the social assistance framework fails to fulfill its equitable mandate, resulting in persistent inclusion and exclusion errors that stall poverty reduction.

Institutional Shifts and Oversight Vulnerabilities

The structural efficacy of local aid distribution is heavily undermined by institutional vulnerabilities stemming from historical regulatory changes in village governance. Under the framework of Law Number 32 of 2004, the transformation of the Village Representative Body (BPD) from an independent, legislative watchdog into a purely advisory and administrative partner has diluted the local system of *checks and balances*. Because the BPD now operates as a partner to the Village Head rather than an objective auditor, its capacity to rigorously scrutinize the implementation of social programs has softened into a mere administrative formality. This functional shift heavily compromises the data verification process of the Integrated Social Welfare Data

(DTKS); village evaluation meetings (*Musdes*) are reduced to a rubber-stamping routine rather than a critical, confrontational assessment of recipient lists. Without an independent institutional counterweight to challenge political bias or data inertia, the village executive apparatus exercises unchecked discretion over data management, which perpetuates inaccuracies and leaves data validation highly vulnerable to complacency.

This structural vulnerability in Sukma Village illustrates a classic pitfall within public policy literature regarding decentralized governance, where political devolution outpaces local institutional capacity and objective oversight. As observed internationally by Reis-Filho et al., decentralization and regulatory re-design often result in institutional fragility and weakened oversight mechanisms, particularly when local bodies lack technical autonomy or a clear separation of powers [10]. When accountability mechanisms are softened under the guise of promoting administrative harmony, local institutions gradually lose their objective auditing capacity. In Sukma Village, this dynamic transforms the BPD from a strict democratic safeguard into a passive administrative sidekick, leaving the vital task of social aid oversight entirely unfulfilled.

Moreover, the democratic transition and local governance reforms in Indonesia have demonstrated that decentralization does not inherently eradicate rent-seeking behaviors or administrative errors; instead, it frequently shifts the locus of data control to local elites. Setiyono argues that without aggressive,

independent oversight bodies at the grassroots level, decentralization merely decentralizes opportunities for data manipulation and the exploitation of public resources by local networks [11]. While there is no overt corruption recorded in Sukma Village, the lack of a rigorous, adversarial auditing process by the BPD creates a technical vacuum. This vacuum allows outdated socioeconomic databases to persist unchallenged, as the internal staff of the executive apparatus faces no external pressure to execute painful, high-friction data corrections.

To understand how communities adapt to these formal oversight failures, Transaction Costs Theory and Decentralization Theory provide vital analytical benchmarks. Decentralization Theory emphasizes that devolving authority to village governments without maintaining rigid, independent local oversight mechanisms inevitably dilutes program integrity and creates institutional gaps [10]. Under Transaction Costs Theory, when formal regulatory structures like the BPD fail to act as aggressive watchdogs, the administrative transaction costs of verifying data skyrocket, forcing the community to rely on slow, inconsistent, informal village networks to flag unfair aid distribution [12]. In the absence of a structurally independent BPD to enforce accountability, the institutional design of Sukma Village remains highly vulnerable to data stagnation and distribution errors.

Administrative and Sociological Barriers to Success

The long-term success of social assistance in driving sustainable development

in Sukma Village is severely bottlenecked by a combination of acute infrastructural deficits and deep-rooted sociological dependencies. Logistically, the village apparatus is crippled by a lack of operational technology, possessing only three laptops to process data updates for 103 families across three hamlets, alongside just one official motorcycle to manage physical distribution over a 50-hectare area. These technological and physical limitations slow down data synchronization with national databases and make thorough field monitoring nearly impossible. Compounding these administrative bottlenecks is a critical sociological barrier: a deeply embedded dependency mindset within the community. Rather than utilizing social assistance as an economic stepping stone, many farming households view it as a permanent entitlement, leading to a culture of underreporting agricultural yields to remain on the subsidy rosters. This welfare dependency, paired with intense social friction whenever the village attempts to graduate households out of the program, transforms social aid from an empowerment tool into an economic crutch that actively stunts rural human resource development.

This operational gridlock confirms established public policy literature showing that severe infrastructure deficits within rural public administrations directly undermine the equity and speed of social service delivery. Bridgman and von Fintel demonstrate that uneven access to public services and administrative infrastructure heavily exacerbates poverty cycles in under-serviced rural areas [13]. When a village lacks the

physical and technological tools to manage its governance portfolio, the execution of any welfare program becomes fundamentally compromised. The digital deficit observed in Sukma Village acts as a structural barrier; without adequate hardware, the digitalization of social welfare cannot achieve its intended economic efficiency, failing to lower administrative costs or optimize target updates as seen in digitally advanced rural networks [14].

Sociologically, the transition of social assistance from a temporary safety net into a permanent economic crutch reflects a well-documented phenomenon where structural welfare dependency halts human capital development. When community support systems and individual households lack diversified production capacities, external aid inadvertently breeds a culture of psychological and economic reliance. As explored by Jia et al., while external social support is critical during immediate crises, its prolonged and unmonitored injection into isolated rural areas can disrupt local economic motivation if not paired with active graduation strategies [15]. In Sukma Village, the social friction generated during recipient graduation meetings highlights a cultural barrier where residents choose intentional economic stagnation underreporting crop yields to secure minor, predictable state subsidies over volatile agricultural market gains.

To address these multi-layered barriers, the Livelihood Capital Framework and the Public–Private–Producer Partnership (4P) Model offer robust strategic paths forward. The Livelihood Capital Framework highlights

that rural well-being cannot be sustained by financial subsidies alone; it requires the balanced development of human, social, and physical capital [16]. By shifting from passive handouts to the 4P Model, the village government could collaborate with private agricultural enterprises and local producer cooperatives to build physical infrastructure and stabilize crop values [17]. Integrating social assistance with multi-stakeholder partnerships allows Sukma Village to systematically dismantle the infrastructure bottlenecks of the local office while simultaneously reshaping the community mindset from welfare dependency toward self-sustaining agricultural industrialization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the field research findings, data analysis, and discussion, this study draws three primary conclusions:

1. The Poverty Paradox and Targeting Inaccuracy

The implementation of the social assistance program in Sukma Village is suboptimal and has failed to effectively reduce the number of poor farming households, despite the high productivity of local corn and bean agricultural sectors. This stagnation stems from a structural mismatch between the rigid, asset-based poverty indicators set by the central government and the highly volatile micro-economic realities of rural producers (such as land-leasing dependencies and seasonal market price crashes). Consequently, systemic inclusion and exclusion errors persist in the welfare registry, reducing

social aid into a short-term, consumptive survival subsidy rather than a transformative catalyst for long-term economic independence.

2. Weakened Institutional Oversight and Data Vulnerabilities

The regulatory shift that transformed the Village Representative Body (BPD) from an independent, legislative watchdog into a purely advisory partner to the Village Government has significantly diluted the local system of checks and balances. As a result, the evaluation and verification process of the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) during village meetings (*Musdes*) has softened into a rubber-stamping administrative formality. Without a structurally independent institutional counterweight to challenge data inertia, the local database remains stagnant and highly vulnerable to targeting inaccuracies.

3. Acute Administrative and Sociological Barriers

The acceleration of rural development and human resource empowerment in Sukma Village is fundamentally bottlenecked by two interconnected limitations:

a. Administrative Deficits: The village apparatus suffers from a severe shortage of operational technology and logistics (possessing only 3 laptops to process data for 103 households and only 1 operational motorcycle), which slows down digital data synchronization with national

databases and cripples comprehensive field monitoring.

b. Sociological Dependencies: A deeply embedded welfare dependency mindset exists within the community, where residents view temporary social protection as a permanent financial entitlement. This triggers intense social friction and drives farming households to underreport their agricultural yields simply to remain on the subsidy rosters, actively stunting poverty alleviation efforts.

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