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# Implementation of the Social Rehabilitation Assistance Program (ATENSI) in the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in the City of Pekanbaru

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## ABSTRACT

The Social Rehabilitation Assistance Program (ATENSI) is a policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia that focuses on improving the welfare and independence of people with disabilities through family, community, and institution-based services. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the ATENSI Program in empowering people with disabilities in the city of Pekanbaru and identify inhibiting factors in its implementation. The research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation. The informants consisted of employees of the Pekanbaru Abiseka Center, social companions, beneficiaries, and families of people with disabilities. The results of the study show that the ATENSI Program has made a positive contribution to increasing the independence of beneficiaries through mobility assistance, entrepreneurial

support, and the fulfillment of basic needs. The Pekanbaru Abiseka Center has a fairly adequate institutional capacity, but the effectiveness of implementation is still constrained by budget limitations, professional personnel, and differences in types and levels of disability. This program needs to be strengthened through training diversification, human resource capacity building, and a continuous monitoring and evaluation system so that the goals of social empowerment of persons with disabilities can be achieved optimally.

## INTRODUCTION

Social welfare is a fundamental right inherent to every citizen and it is the responsibility of the state to fulfill it. In the context of national development, social welfare is not only understood as the fulfillment of basic needs, but also as an effort to improve the quality of life and strengthen community independence, especially for vulnerable groups. One of the main groups of concern is people with disabilities, who until now still face various obstacles in obtaining equal opportunities in the economic, social, and educational fields (Suharto, 2021).

Persons with disabilities are an integral part of society that has the right and potential to contribute to development. However, in practice, they often face discrimination and marginalization that limits access to productive resources and opportunities to participate. Based on Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, the state is obliged to provide services and support that ensure the fulfillment of their basic rights. However, policy implementation often does not run optimally due to limited resources and coordination between agencies (Purwanti & Kurniawan, 2023).

The main problem faced by people with disabilities in Indonesia is limited access to education, employment, and inclusive social services. These barriers are not only structural, but also cultural, where social stigma is still strongly embedded in society. This condition results in many people with disabilities being in a situation of dependence and powerless to develop their potential independently (Mulia & Arifin, 2022). Therefore, social policies are needed that are able to integrate the dimensions of rehabilitation and empowerment at the same time.

In an effort to answer these challenges, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia introduced the Social Rehabilitation Assistance Program (ATENSI) as a holistic and human rights-based social service innovation. The program is designed to restore the social functioning of persons with disabilities through a family, community, and institution-based approach. This approach is expected to strengthen the independence of beneficiaries by providing services that suit individual needs, not just charitable assistance (Widodo et al., 2023).

ATENSI has seven main components that are interconnected, namely meeting basic needs, social care, family support, therapy, vocational training, entrepreneurship coaching, and accessibility support. Through these components, the program is not only oriented towards providing physical assistance, but also building the economic and social capacity of people with disabilities so that they are able to live independently and productively. Thus, ATENSI affirms the paradigm shift from *a charity-based approach* to *an empowerment-based approach*, where people with disabilities are positioned as subjects of social development.

Pekanbaru City is one of the regions that actively implements the ATENSI Program through the Abiseka Center, an implementing institution under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Based on data from the Pekanbaru City Social Service in 2024, there are 1,126 people with disabilities spread across all sub-districts, with the highest concentration in Tenayan Raya. This figure represents an increase compared to the previous year, indicating the need for more adaptive and sustainable social interventions. This condition also reflects that the issue of disability

in Pekanbaru is not only a matter of number, but also the effectiveness of the social rehabilitation programs that are carried out.

The implementation of ATENSI in Pekanbaru involves various forms of support, such as assistance with mobility aids (wheelchairs, canes, prosthetic legs), entrepreneurship programs for people with productive disabilities, and the fulfillment of basic needs for the underprivileged. This program has generally had a positive impact on beneficiaries, especially in terms of increased mobility, social participation, and economic capabilities. However, results in the field show that the implementation still faces various obstacles, such as limited professional personnel, insufficient operational funds, and variations in needs between types of disabilities.

In addition, external factors such as the socioeconomic conditions of the beneficiaries and the level of family support also affect the success of the program. Some people with disabilities do not yet have a supportive environment to participate in empowerment activities, so the impact of the program is not always sustainable. This is in line with the theory of policy implementation put forward by Grindle (1980), which emphasizes that the effectiveness of program implementation is highly dependent on the social context and capacity of implementing agencies at the local level.

To understand more deeply the dynamics of the implementation of ATENSI in Pekanbaru, it is necessary to analyze based on the theory of program implementation from David C. Korten (1988) which highlights the importance of conformity between programs, implementing organizations, and beneficiaries. This approach is relevant to assess how the harmonization of the three elements can determine the success or failure of the program. In addition, Gow and Morss's (1988) theory is used to identify inhibiting factors both from the internal and external sides of the institution and the beneficiaries.

Based on this context, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the Social Rehabilitation Assistance Program (ATENSI) in empowering people with disabilities in the city of Pekanbaru and identify its inhibiting factors. The results of the research are expected to make an empirical contribution to the development of more inclusive, effective, and sustainable social policies, as well as become an academic reference for further research in the field of policy implementation and empowerment of vulnerable groups in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The implementation of public policy is the process of translating political decisions into concrete actions to achieve the goals that have been set (Wahyudi, 2016). According to Grindle (1980), the success of policy implementation is determined by two aspects, namely the *content of policy* (policy substance) and the *context of implementation*. The substance includes program objectives, resources, and implementation strategies, while the implementation context includes the characteristics of the implementers, the socio-political environment, and institutional support.

David C. Korten (1988) developed a program implementation model that became the basis of this research. He emphasized that the success of the implementation is influenced by three main suitability:

1. The suitability between the program and the beneficiaries, namely the extent to which the program responds to the needs of the target group.
2. The suitability between the program and the implementing organization, namely the ability of the institution to implement the program according to the mandate.
3. The suitability between the beneficiaries and the implementing organization, namely the ability of the program's target to receive and utilize the results of the program.

In addition, to understand implementation barriers, the theory from Gow and Morss (1988) is also used which identifies two types of inhibiting factors:

- Internal factors include limited human resources, facilities, funds, and institutional coordination.
- External factors include the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries and differences in the characteristics of the program's targets.

These two theories complement each other to explain the dynamics of social policy implementation involving many environmental actors and variables.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. Descriptive research is a type of research that is carried out with the aim of describing and describing the objects and phenomena being studied (Siagian, 2011: 52). According to Soegianto in Harahap (2020), the purpose of qualitative research is to explain a phenomenon in the deepest possible way by collecting data in depth, which shows the importance of the depth and detail of the data being studied.

The research was conducted in the city of Pekanbaru, which is one of the cities in Riau province that receives the Social Rehabilitation Assistance (ATENSI) assistance program for people with disabilities in the city of Pekanbaru. In this study, the determination of informants with key informant techniques, namely selected with certain considerations and objectives and data collection techniques using interviews, observations and documentation.

Korten (1988) introduced the concept of fit which emphasizes that the success of social programs is determined by the harmonization between program design, implementing organizations, and the characteristics of target groups. The incompatibility of one of these elements will hinder the achievement of optimal results.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The implementation of the ATENSI program at the Pekanbaru Abiseka Center has had a real impact on increasing the independence of people with disabilities. Mobility assistance, skills training, and entrepreneurship support are tangible forms

of the government's commitment to social empowerment. In looking at the implementation of Social Rehabilitation Assistance (ATENSI) assistance for people with disabilities in the city of Pekanbaru, the researcher used David C. Korten's theory which includes three indicators, including: (1) the suitability between the program and the beneficiaries, (2) the suitability between the program and the implementing organization, and (3) the suitability between the beneficiaries and the implementing organization.

### **1. Compatibility between the program and the beneficiaries**

The implementation of the Social Rehabilitation Assistance Program (ATENSI) in Pekanbaru City shows that the form of assistance provided by the Abiseka Center has been adjusted to the specific needs of people with disabilities. Through the initial assessment process, social workers identify the physical, social, and economic conditions of potential beneficiaries to determine the most appropriate type of assistance. The results of the assessment became the basis for the distribution of mobility aids such as wheelchairs, canes, prosthetic legs, as well as entrepreneurial assistance and the fulfillment of basic needs. This needs-based approach demonstrates a systematic effort to ensure that each social intervention has a direct relevance to the beneficiary's condition. This is in line with the principle of *need-based intervention* emphasized by Korten (1988), that the suitability between programs and community needs is a key factor in the successful implementation of social policies.

In addition to physical assistance, the ATENSI program also provides social support in the form of guidance, counseling, and basic entrepreneurship training. Through a participatory approach, beneficiaries are involved in determining the form of assistance they need, so that a sense of ownership and responsibility for the results of the program is created. For example, some people with productive disabilities choose assistance in the form of small business capital such as coffee shops, sewing, or motorcycle washing businesses. The assistance has been proven to increase their confidence and economic independence. However, some beneficiaries said that the entrepreneurial assistance provided was still temporary because it had not been followed by advanced training such as business management, product promotion, or marketing strategies. Thus, even though the program has adapted the assistance to basic needs, strengthening the sustainability aspect is still needed so that the results of empowerment do not stop at the initial stage.

In terms of beneficiary perception, most consider the ATENSI program to be very helpful in improving the ability to be active and participate in social life. People with disabilities who previously felt isolated are now more confident to interact with the surrounding community. For example, mobility aid recipients can return to daily activities without full dependence on family, while small business assistance recipients begin to contribute to the household economy. This fact shows that the program not only provides material benefits, but also strengthens the psychological and social aspects of the recipient. These findings reinforce Korten's view that the success of program implementation must be measured by the extent to which the results fit the needs and capacity of the communities served.

However, this study also found gaps in program implementation, especially at the evaluation stage after the distribution of aid. Limited monitoring makes it difficult to measure long-term effectiveness in improving the welfare of beneficiaries. Some



informants revealed that after receiving initial assistance, not all recipients received follow-up assistance on a regular basis. Additionally, variations in disability rates make each individual's needs different; People with intellectual disabilities, for example, need a more intensive approach than people with physical disabilities. Therefore, a continuous assessment system is needed to update the data on the needs of beneficiaries so that the program remains adaptive and responsive to changing socio-economic conditions. Integration between assessment, training, and evaluation is the key to ensuring that the implementation of ATENSI is truly aligned with the principles of social empowerment that are just and inclusive.

## **2. Compatibility between the program and the implementing organization**

The implementation of the Social Rehabilitation Assistance Program (ATENSI) in the city of Pekanbaru is carried out by the Pekanbaru Abiseka Center, which is under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. This institution has an organizational structure consisting of social workers, psychologists, rehabilitation assistants, and administrative staff who are in charge of program management. Institutionally, the Abiseka Center has a fairly clear working mechanism through the stages of needs assessment, individual service planning, implementation of assistance, to the monitoring and evaluation stage. The capacity of this institution shows that there is a compatibility between the characteristics of the implementing organization and the program mandate, as explained by Korten (1988), that the success of implementation is highly determined by the organizational fit or the ability of the institution to adjust the structure, resources, and work system to the objectives of the program being run.

From the results of the interview, it is known that the implementation of ATENSI is carried out by prioritizing the principle of individual needs-based services (individual care plan). Each beneficiary receives an intervention tailored to their conditions and potential. This approach allows the implementing organization to provide more humanistic and participatory services. In addition, social workers and field assistants carry out a dual function, namely as facilitators as well as motivators for beneficiaries to be more confident and dare to be independent. This shows that the Abiseka Center not only plays a role as a distribution of aid, but also as an agent of social empowerment. However, employees admit that the workload is quite high because they have to handle many beneficiaries with a limited number of workers, so the quality of mentoring is sometimes not optimal.

In a managerial context, the Abiseka Center is also faced with budget limitations that have an impact on the scale of program implementation. Most program funds are focused on physical assistance and basic needs, while budgets for skills training and economic empowerment are relatively small. This condition reflects an imbalance between the rehabilitative aspect and the empowerment aspect in the implementation of ATENSI. According to Grindle (1980), the resource factor is one of the determinants of successful policy implementation; Without adequate budget support and professionals, even good policies can be difficult to achieve optimal results. Therefore, although institutionally the Abiseka Center has a clear structural capacity, limited human and financial resources are a significant obstacle in expanding the scope and intensity of services.

In addition to internal problems, implementing organizations also face external coordination challenges. The implementation of ATENSI requires cross-sectoral cooperation, including with the Social Service, local governments, and community institutions. However, coordination between these institutions is still not running optimally due to differences in the administrative system and program priorities in each agency. As a result, there is often overlap of beneficiary data or delays in the verification process. This condition emphasizes that the effectiveness of the implementing organization is not only determined by its internal structure, but also by the ability to build collaborative networks that are adaptive to social dynamics in the field. To increase the compatibility between the implementing organization and the program objectives, a strategy to strengthen cross-sector coordination and improve managerial competence for implementers at the local level is needed so that the implementation of ATENSI can run more integrated and efficiently.

### **3. Compatibility between the beneficiary group and the implementing organization**

Conformity between beneficiaries and implementing organizations is an important aspect in assessing the success of the implementation of the ATENSI Program in the City of Pekanbaru. Based on the findings of the research, most of the beneficiaries determined by the Pekanbaru Abiseka Center have gone through a careful and transparent social assessment process. This assessment includes the identification of the type of disability, level of independence, and socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries. Through this process, the assistance provided can be adjusted to the ability and readiness of the recipient to receive social intervention. Thus, there is an initial alignment between the characteristics of the beneficiaries and the service approach provided by the implementing agency. This assessment-based approach also demonstrates the institution's efforts to ensure that beneficiaries truly understand the program's objectives, so that they can actively participate in its implementation.

Suitability can also be seen from the involvement of beneficiaries in the process of planning and implementing activities. The Abiseka Center applies the principle of a participatory approach, where beneficiaries are given space to express their aspirations and determine the form of assistance that suits their potential. For example, people with disabilities who have sewing skills are facilitated with the help of sewing machines and production materials, while those who have physical limitations but are able to sell are given small business capital assistance. This participatory approach not only increases the effectiveness of the program, but also builds a sense of responsibility and motivation from beneficiaries to manage aid in a sustainable manner. This reflects the view of Korten (1988) that the success of program implementation depends heavily on the level of conformity between the ability and will of the community with the structure and mechanism of the implementing organization.

However, the compatibility between beneficiaries and implementing organizations still faces a number of challenges. Variations in the type of disability are the main factors that affect the effectiveness of interactions between social companions and beneficiaries. People with physical disabilities generally have an easier time adjusting to entrepreneurial programs, while people with intellectual disabilities require a more intensive, repetitive, and personalized approach. In some

cases, the limited number of support workers causes services for people with disabilities with complex needs to be provided optimally. In addition, geographical factors are also an obstacle to the implementation of regular field visits, especially for beneficiaries who live in the suburbs of Pekanbaru. This condition indicates the need to differentiate assistance strategies based on the type and level of disability so that the program can run in a more inclusive and proportionate manner.

In addition to internal factors, the social environment of the beneficiaries also affects the suitability with the implementing institution. Some beneficiaries revealed that the support of their families and the surrounding community played a big role in their success in undergoing the empowerment process. However, some others face obstacles due to the social stigma that places people with disabilities as passive and unproductive individuals. This stigma often hinders the efforts of implementing institutions in fostering the spirit of independence of beneficiaries. Therefore, in addition to distributing assistance and assistance, the Abiseka Center needs to strengthen education and socialization programs to the community in order to create an inclusive environment. With the support of a positive social environment, the compatibility between beneficiaries and implementing organizations can be strengthened, so that the goals of social empowerment can be achieved more sustainably.

#### **4. Factors Inhibiting Program Implementation**

Based on the results of the study, the implementation of the Social Rehabilitation Assistance Program (ATENSI) in Pekanbaru City is inseparable from various obstacles that affect the effectiveness and achievements of the program. In general, these obstacles can be categorized into two groups, namely internal factors and external factors as stated by Gow and Morss (1988). Internal factors come from within the implementing organization related to the capacity of human resources, facilities, and financing, while external factors include social, economic, and beneficiary characteristics. These two factors are interrelated and contribute to the success or failure of a social policy. In the context of ATENSI, the success of the program is highly dependent on the ability of the implementing agency to manage internal constraints while adapting to external social dynamics in the field.

The most dominant internal factors are limited human resources (HR) and operational budgets. The number of social assistance workers at the Abiseka Center is still not proportional to the number of beneficiaries that must be handled. A social companion can handle tens to hundreds of beneficiaries in various sub-districts, so the frequency of field visits and evaluations is limited. This condition results in some beneficiaries not receiving follow-up assistance after assistance is provided. On the other hand, the available budget allocation is more focused on physical assistance, while funds for skills training, therapy, and entrepreneurship coaching are still very limited. As a result, empowerment activities that are supposed to be sustainable tend to be short-term. These internal obstacles show that institutional strengthening and managerial efficiency are important requirements for the implementation of ATENSI to run optimally.

In addition, limited facilities and infrastructure are also real obstacles in the implementation of the program. The Abiseka Center does not have adequate training facilities, so skill activities still have to be carried out in turn or in collaboration with



third parties. The limited tools and service space also make the social rehabilitation process unable to be carried out intensively. Another problem that arises is that the information system and beneficiary database are not optimal, so that there is a potential for overlap of data between the central and regional governments. This is in line with the view of Grindle (1980) who emphasized the importance of administrative support and cross-agency coordination in ensuring the effectiveness of policy implementation. Without a strong and integrated data system, it will be difficult to implement social programs to achieve efficiency and accuracy of targets.

Externally, the implementation of ATENSI is influenced by the diversity of characteristics of people with disabilities and their socioeconomic conditions. People with physical, intellectual, sensory, and dual disabilities have different needs, while some beneficiary families still have traditional views that tend to be protective of family members with disabilities. Low family support causes some beneficiaries to be unable to maintain the businesses or activities facilitated by the program. In addition, the limited accessibility of the environment and the lack of job opportunities in the community also strengthen the cycle of dependence. These external barriers show that the empowerment of persons with disabilities is not enough through the intervention of social institutions alone, but requires the active involvement of families, communities, and the private sector. Therefore, multi-stakeholder synergy is the key to ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the ATENSI Program in the long term.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the implementation of the Social Rehabilitation Assistance Program (ATENSI) in Pekanbaru City has made a real contribution to improving the welfare and independence of people with disabilities through the provision of mobility assistance, skills training, entrepreneurship support, and the fulfillment of basic needs tailored to the conditions and potential beneficiaries. An approach based on individual assessment and active participation makes the beneficiary not only an object, but also an empowered subject of social development. However, the effectiveness of the program still faces several obstacles, both internal such as budget limitations, the number of professionals, and training facilities, as well as external in the form of diversity of types of disabilities, socioeconomic conditions, and low family and environmental support. The Abiseka Center as an implementing institution has shown adequate institutional capacity, but it needs to be strengthened in terms of cross-sector coordination, continuous monitoring, and synergy with local governments and communities. Therefore, the optimization of the ATENSI Program needs to be directed at increasing the capacity of human resources, diversifying empowerment programs based on local potential, and building an integrated evaluation system in order to be able to create inclusive, sustainable, and equitable social empowerment for people with disabilities in the city of Pekanbaru.

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