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Evaluation of the role of village government in handling of stunting policy in Surakarta

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Abstract

Background: Stunting is one of the nutritional problems in toddlers that has become a global concern. Stunting is a chronic nutritional problem due to a lack of nutritional intake over a long period characterized by height that is not by age, which occurs in toddlers. Surakarta City is one of the areas that ranks 17 out of 35 districts/cities in the Central Java Province with the highest stunting prevalence rate of 20,4% in 2021. Based on the survey results, it was determined that the health center with the highest number of stunting cases in Surakarta City is Pajang Health Center, with 187 stunting children. Village governments are required to participate actively in dealing with stunting. However, several regions in Indonesia still have problems in dealing with stunting cases.

Purpose: To analyze the role of village government in the Pajang Village area in handling stunting policy.

Method: This study was qualitative. The informants were selected using purposive sampling. They were divided into two groups: primary informants and triangulation informants. The main informants were the Midwife, Nutritionist, integrated service post chairman of work program 4 family empowerment and welfare. The triangulation informants were The Head of the Village and The Village Secretary.

Results: Based on Ryaas Rasyid's Theory, this study's results show that the village government's role as a regulator, denominator, and facilitator has been implemented well and optimally, but there are obstacles to budget allocation related to stunting.

Conclusion: The role of the government as a regulator has been running well, as seen from the optimal planning, implementation, and evaluation in handling stunting. The role of the government as a denominator is seen in providing education and training to nutritionists, cadres, and the community. Meanwhile, the role of the government as a facilitator has not been running optimally because there are still obstacles in managing the budget related to stunting and the lack of facilities provided by the village government.

Keywords: Role; Stunting; Village Government.

INTRODUCTION

Stunting is one of the nutritional problems in children under five that has become a global concern. An area is said to be chronically malnourished if the prevalence rate of stunting is more than 20% or children weighing less than 5%. The total prevalence of stunting in 2020 is 22% or around 149.2 million under-fives in all countries (World Health Organization, 2021). Southeast Asia is the Asian continent that has the highest prevalence rate of

29.4% compared to East Asia at 14.4% and West Asia at 20.9%. In 2018, Indonesia ranked 108th with the highest number of stunted toddlers in the world and second in the Southeast Asia region. Based on the results of Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey in 2022, the national stunting rate has decreased from 24.4% in 2021 to 21.6% in 2022. Despite this decline, strategies are needed to achieve the stunting prevalence target of 14% by 2024 (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

Prevalence of stunting cases in Central Java is 33.4% and has decreased by 20.9% in 2021. Meanwhile, the Surakarta City Health Office survey data recorded the prevalence of stunting in 2019 at 2.53%. In 2020, there was a jump of 0.84% to 3.37%, decreasing to 1.70% in 2021 (Surakarta City Health Office, 2021). It was found that three regions in Central Java Province have the lowest level of medium stunting prevalence, namely Sukoharjo Regency at 20%, followed by Surakarta City at 20.4%, and Temanggung Regency at 20.5%. This rate is still low compared to the rate of stunting cases in Central Java, which is 20.9%. However, from this data, it can be seen that the stunting rate is still above the government target of 14%, which is an issue that must be considered and addressed immediately (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

The Koto Tengah Village Government in Jambi Province points out several things that must be optimized related to handling stunting, including planning and budgeting, implementation, reporting and evaluation, and human resources (Sandari, & Julianto, 2023). In Ko'olan Village, East Java Province has a program to overcome stunting, namely the "Gojek Integrated service post" (GOPO) Program. However, there are obstacles in its implementation, namely the absence of a specially allocated budget, the lack of facilities and infrastructure that need to be improved, and the lack of human resources to participate in the GOPO Program (Suhroh & Pradana, 2021). In Pegunungan Bintang District, Papua Province, there are still several obstacles in handling stunting, namely the absence of monitoring of the stunting reduction program, the lack of a stunting reduction acceleration team, and the lack of nutritionist human resources in the area (Nurak & Bakri, 2022). In addition, it was found that some villages in Indonesia have special policies related to stunting prevention and handling, such as Donowarih Village, East Java Province, which experienced obstacles related to the allocation of funds in the regional revenue and expenditure budget and infrastructure (Rahman, Werenfridus, & Ukhra, 2021).

Meanwhile, village governments have a vital role in reducing stunting. There are three roles of the village government that can be carried out, namely the role of the government as a regulator, denominator, and facilitator (Labolo, 2023). The government's role as a regulator is how the government's efforts in

providing a regulation related to stunting. The government's role as a dynamizer is to provide assistance and guidance to health workers and the community in efforts to reduce stunting. The government's role as a facilitator is to provide infrastructure and budget for each stunting reduction program. Surakarta City is one of the areas that ranks 17th out of 35 districts /cities in Central Java Province, with the highest stunting prevalence rate of 20.4% in 2021 (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). In 2022, there was an increase in stunting cases in Surakarta City from 494 stunting toddlers to 788 stunting cases. The Surakarta City Government has made various efforts to reduce the prevalence of stunting, such as having Surakarta Mayor Regulation Number 25.8 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Integrated Stunting Reduction and the First 1000 Days of Life Program. However, some areas still experience obstacles in overcoming stunting cases, such as those in Semanggi Village where infrastructure is inadequate. The houses of the Semanggi community must comply with healthy housing standards (Suhartatik, haryo Bintoro, Christyanna, Bhakti, & Sholeca, 2022). Gilingan is one of the villages that is quite good at handling stunting because it has a Healthy Kitchen to Overcome Stunting program. However, there are several obstacles in its implementation, such as limited operational funds (Amelinda & Haryani, 2023).

Based on the results of the preliminary survey, it was found that the health center with the highest number of stunting cases was Pajang Health Center, with 187 stunting children, followed by Sibela Health Center, with 180 stunting children, and Pucang Sawit Health Center, with 132 stunting children. The distribution of stunting cases in Pajang Health Center in several villages, including Pajang Village, 96 children; Sondakan Village, 38 children; Karangasem Village, 39 children; and Laweyan Village, 14 children. From the results of the literature review, it was found that more specific research was needed to analyze the role of village governments in Surakarta City in efforts to deal with stunting. Therefore, researchers are interested in analyzing the role of village governments in the Pajang Health Center area in handling stunting cases (Qomariyah, & Fatmawati, 2024).

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RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research methods with a case study approach. The case in this study is the village government's stunting reduction program. This study aims to analyze the role of the village government in the Pajang Health Center area in handling stunting cases. This research was conducted in Pajang Village, one with the highest stunting rate in the Pajang Health Center area. This research will be conducted from May to June 2024.

This research uses the theory of the government's role as a regulator, which is to provide basic rules or references that are easily understood by the community so that they become community guidelines in every activity. In this case, regarding stunting cases, the village government can make village regulations to support every stunting prevention and control activity. This regulation is developed by involving various interested parties to proactively tackle stunting cases. The village government and other institutions will implement the regulations. This implementation process cannot be separated from observation. This is a determined factor in the success or failure of a regulation that has been established. Evaluation is carried out to see if the regulation has overcome the problem. Regulatory evaluation has an important role in the public regulation stage. The theory of the government's role as a dynamizer, the government aims to encourage community participation in maintaining the dynamics of regional development. The role of the village government can be in the form of providing guidance and empowerment to the community intensely and effectively. This guidance and empowerment is very much needed in maintaining the dynamics of government, as is done by the extension team and certain agencies that provide direction and assistance to the community in order to create public awareness to participate in every development. The government's role as a facilitator is that the government must be able to create favorable conditions in the development process to bridge the various needs of the community. In this case, the facilities that can be provided by the village government to overcome the problem of stunting include facilities and infrastructure as well as the village budget to fund each stunting reduction program.

The subjects in this study consisted of two groups

of informants, namely main informants and triangulation informants. The main information used in this study consisted of midwives, cadres, nutritionists, and the head of work program 4 family empowerment and welfare. The triangulation informants in this study were the village head and the village secretary. The reasons for selecting these informants include the village head has a role in establishing stunting regulations and mobilizing the active role of the village community, the village secretary has a role in coordinating the preparation of regulations with the village head, the midwife has a role in providing education and monitoring baby growth every month at integrated service post to reduce stunting cases, cadres have a role in providing education and monitoring baby growth every month at integrated service post to reduce stunting cases, cadres act as a bridge between the community and health workers in the village to reduce stunting cases, nutritionists play a role in motivating cadres and providing counseling related to children's health to the community, and the Head of work program 4 family empowerment and welfare plays a role in organizing activities related to maternal, infant, and toddler health.

The data collection technique in this research uses semi-structured interview techniques and starts from the issues raised in the interview guidelines. This guideline focuses on specific points under study and can be revised if new ideas appear later. Interviews were conducted, with each interview lasting 15-20 minutes. They were conducted on informants who met the criteria so that the data obtained was according to the research objectives. This research uses the content analysis research method. Content analysis is a systematic research technique for analyzing messages conveyed by an informant. Content analysis emphasizes how researchers interpret the content of communication and symbolic interactions in communication. The essence of a content analysis is that researchers find out the content and intent of a text. Researchers must be careful when analyzing to stay in the content and purpose of a text.

Data analysis in this study uses the theory Data Display. This data can be presented in the form of writing, pictures, graphs, and tables. The purpose of presenting data is to combine all the information obtained so researchers can draw the situation in the field. This is done so that researchers have no

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difficulty presenting the information from the research results, so researchers can make a narrative, graph, or matrix to make it easier to understand the information. Data reduction is summarizing all information in the field by selecting important things and arranging them systematically so that they are easy to understand. The data that has been reduced will provide a clearer picture of the results of research in the field. The reduction process focuses on problem solving to find meaning and is carried out continuously during the research. Verification of data obtained through interviews and observations will be recorded

in field notes, which consist of two parts, namely descriptive notes and reflective notes. Descriptive notes relate to what the researcher saw, heard, and witnessed during the research. While reflective notes contain the opinions and interpretations of researchers related to findings in the field. Drawing conclusions is the process of formulating the meaning of the research results with sentences that are easy to understand, which are carried out during the research process.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of Key Informants and Triangulation Informants

Informants	Position	Gender	Education Background
Key Informants			
KI1	Midwife	Female	Bachelor of Midwifery
KI2	Nutritionist	Female	Bachelor of Nutrition
KI3	Integrated Service Post Cadres	Female	Senior High School
KI4	Chairman Of Work Program 4 Family Empowerment and Welfare	Female	Senior High School
Triangulation Informants			
TI1	Head of Village	Male	Bachelor
TI2	Village Secretary	Male	Bachelor

Table 1. Shows that Midwives play a role in providing education and monitoring infant growth and development every month at the Integrated Service Post in an effort to reduce stunting cases. Nutritionists play a role in motivating cadres and providing counseling related to child health to the community. Integrated Service Post cadres act as liaisons between the community and health workers in the village, with the aim of reducing stunting cases. The Head of Family Empowerment and Welfare Working Group 4 plays a role in monitoring and building community involvement in preventing stunting. The Village Head plays a role in determining stunting regulations and mobilizing the active role of the village community. The Village Secretary plays a role in coordinating and implementing efforts to reduce stunting, as well as ensuring that services are on target.

DISCUSSION

The role of Government as a Regulator

The government's role as a regulator is how the government's efforts, in this case referring to the Village Head, provide a basic rule or reference that is easily understood by the community so that it becomes a community guide in every activity that will be carried out. This regulation will regulate connectivity between agencies and other institutions in dealing with stunting cases. The regulations that have been established can last temporarily or permanently according to the needs of the village.

Systematic and direct planning is needed to prepare a regulation that is in accordance with the objectives to be achieved. This regulation was formulated by involving various parties with a proactive interest in tackling stunting cases.

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"At first, the health center followed the regulations from the Health Office regarding the Reduction and Acceleration of Stunting and the Mayor's Regulation. The health center feels that the Mayor and the Office have regulations and innovations from the health center to boost stunting reduction. This encourages the health center to make a new regulation related to stunting. The regulation that has been compiled is Determining the Reduction of Stunting Prevention. The regulation on Determining the Reduction of Stunting Prevention was legalized in February 2023" (KI2).

"Every year, there is planning such as conducting "deliberation" Stunting, which is attended by the family empowerment and welfare mobilizing team, the village, the Public Health Office, especially at the Pajang Village Health Center, and Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Population Control and Family Planning. "deliberation" stunting activities usually discuss stunting issues in their respective areas. In addition to conducting stunting meetings, deliberation meetings with toddler "integrated service post" implementers and cadres are also needed. The meeting discussed grants provided by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and related to the Supplementary Feeding Program and the Office Stationery needed. A plan is also inseparable from budgeting by writing more details related to the distribution of the budget provided by the City Government, which is adjusted to the needs, as well as managing existing Human Resources to be effective and efficient in helping implement various stunting handling programs." (T11).

"Regulations related to stunting have been made in the Pajang Village Head regulation concerning the Acceleration Team for Stunting Reduction in Pajang Village, Laweyan Subdistrict, Surakarta City in 2022, which is a guideline for midwives, family empowerment and welfare teams, and cadres to overcome stunting." (TI2.)

Based on the results of interviews with informants, it can be seen that health centers and sub-districts have different regulations according to their respective fields of work, and planning in making these regulations has been running optimally. There are innovations from health centers to boost stunting reduction as well as stunting meetings and discussions with related parties in efforts to handle stunting. This is in line with previous research which

states that development implementation cannot be carried out spontaneously because it requires careful planning and attention to efficient budget support to obtain results that are beneficial to people's lives. Although the regulations between health centers and sub-districts are different, coordination must still be carried out so that each perception is the same and there are no differences (Kaja, 2020)

Regulations set by the village government and other institutions will be implemented. This implementation process will determine whether or not a regulation has been established.

"Implementation of health center regulations related to stunting reduction, namely "nutrition pouch Program." (KI2)

"The implementation carried out by the village government is the existence of programs related to handling stunting" (TI2).

The results found after conducting interviews with informants were that the Health Center implemented the "Nutrition Bag" Program, namely as an implementation of the established regulations. Meanwhile, the Village Government organizes various programs related to handling stunting. This is in line with previous research which states that implementation is an activity of distributing policy outputs carried out by managers and implementers to target groups to realize policy objectives (Purwanto, & Sulistyastuti, 2012).

After implementation, the next stage is evaluation. Evaluation is carried out to see whether the regulation has overcome the obstacles that occur. *"Every month, coordination and evaluation regarding the treatment are carried out. The meeting discusses the assistance provided, which will be evaluated, and child development will also be measured to see whether there is an increase. The meeting was attended by midwives, cadres, nutritionists, village heads, the family empowerment and welfare team, Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Population Control and Family Planning, and Family Planning Field Officer." (KI2, KI3, KI4, T11, TI2).*

Based on the interview results, all informants stated that the evaluation was conducted during a monthly meeting attended by midwives, cadres, nutritionists, village heads, the family empowerment and welfare team, Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Population Control and Family Planning, and Family Planning Field Officer. This

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evaluation will discuss the assistance provided and see reports related to child growth and development. This evaluation will be used as input for the village government and other health workers to overcome obstacles during implementation. This is in line with previous research which explains that at the evaluation stage it can be seen how the implementation of the policy is going, the advantages and disadvantages that occur, whether the regulations implemented have a positive or negative impact and become a benchmark for subsequent policies that will be made by the government and implementers (Permatasari, 2020). This is also in line with other research which states that evaluation is an activity to assess and analyze the implementation of policies that have been carried out during the activity and at the end of the activity to find out whether the regulations and activities that have been carried out are worthy of being continued or not, and whether or not improvements or terminations need to be made (Setiawan, Wibowo, Oktarina, & Rahmadia, 2022).

Based on the interview results, all informants stated that the evaluation was conducted during a monthly meeting attended by midwives, cadres, nutritionists, village heads, family empowerment and welfare team, Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Population Control and Family Planning, and Family Planning Field Officer. This evaluation will discuss the assistance provided and see reports related to child growth and development. This evaluation will be used as input for the village government and other health workers to overcome obstacles during implementation. This is in accordance with other studies that at the evaluation stage it can be seen how the implementation of the policy is going, the advantages and disadvantages that occur, whether the regulations implemented have a positive or negative impact and become a benchmark for subsequent policies to be made by the government and implementers (Permatasari, 2020).

The role of Government as a Dynamizer

The government's role as a dynamizer encourages public participation in maintaining the dynamics of regional development. The village government plays a role by providing the public with intense and effective coaching and empowerment. This guidance and empowerment are very much needed in maintaining the dynamics of the

government, which is carried out by a team of extension workers and certain agencies that provide direction and assistance to the community to create public awareness to participate in every activity (Simanjuntak, Haya, Suryani, Khomsan, & Ahmad, 2019).

Coaching health workers aims to improve knowledge and skills related to maternal and child health, child and maternal nutrition, and activities that can prevent and manage stunting. This coaching includes material, practice, and field simulations so that health workers can apply them in real situations (Zainiah, & Suratini, 2014).

"The Head of the Village or health center usually provides training for cadres. Training from the Head of the Village is usually conducted for one month at the 'auxiliary health center', and the material is related to the life cycle. Meanwhile, training provided by the health center can be in the form of seminars on how to prevent and handle stunting, which are given to each cadre representative of each hemlet. The cadres who attend the seminar will convey it back to their respective areas." (K13).

"The health center has conducted the training for the nutritionist, and the name of the training is 'Toddler Integrated Service Post' Cadre Class, and the training provided is related to anthropometric measurements and how to measure the correct nutritional status of mothers. This training was conducted four times, and different materials were used for each meeting. Other training provided is related to Supplementary Feeding, namely, how to make additional food according to the nutritional needs of toddlers. Counseling for the community is usually carried out in conjunction with 'Integrated Service Post' activities, and the material provided is related to stunting prevention." (K12).

"We have provided education to the community to each cadre to create a stunting-free golden generation. This education is related to children under five and the health of pregnant women until childbirth. In addition, we also provide training to cadre representatives related to the entire life cycle at 'auxiliary health center' for one full month." (T11).

The results of the interview showed that cadres and nutritionists received training related to stunting from the village head and nutritionists. It was seen that cadres received two training sessions provided by both the health center and the village head. This is in

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line with previous research which stated that the lack of training and coaching to improve optimal knowledge and skills for cadres resulted in a lack of understanding of cadre duties (Zainiah, & Suratini, 2014). Cadres play an important role in changing healthy living behavior in the community through various approaches to make it easier for the community to access quality health information and services (Sari, Angraini, Imantika, & Oktaria, 2021).

Community empowerment is an integral part of health promotion to improve the health status of the people. Each region has its own and different ways of providing community empowerment. With this empowerment, the community will be able to apply it in their daily lives to increase the degree of public health (Trinanda, 2023).

"The 'One Egg to Overcome Stunting' program which is referred to by the locals as 'Pagar Sate Ati', is an innovative approach developed by Pajang Village to address stunting. The program aims to improve the nutritional status of stunted children and pregnant women by providing eggs as a vital source of protein and nutrients. Its primary objective is to prevent the birth of babies with Low Birth Weight (LBW) and to enhance the growth and development of affected children. The program, managed by the Family Welfare Movement Team in collaboration with local health cadres, is a community-driven initiative with financial support sourced from residents, ensuring a sustainable, locally funded approach. Eggs are collected during regular community gatherings in each neighborhood and distributed monthly, with health reports reviewed beforehand to match the supply to the number of stunted children in each area. Distribution continues until children show significant weight gain and are declared healthy by health workers, ensuring the program's effectiveness in improving the health of the community. In addition to eggs, the program incorporates a milk distribution initiative involving representatives from community organizations, including the village head, midwives, and health cadres. This ensures a holistic approach to addressing nutritional deficiencies." (KI3, KI4, TI2)

The Nutrition Bag Program program which is referred to by the locals as "Kantong Gizi". To complement these efforts, the local health center implements the nutrition bag program. This initiative provides additional nutritional support to children and families, further contributing to the fight against stunting. Both

programs exemplify how grassroots innovation, coupled with active community involvement, can effectively address public health challenges like stunting. (KI2, KI3).

"Empowerment is done for the community by monitoring and preparing Supplementary Feeding menus. Monitoring is done by seeing whether the supplementary food provided is consumed, whether it is right on target, and the quality of the food provided. Every month or two weeks will be evaluated by weighing the children's weight." (KI1).

Based on the results of interviews with six informants, it is found that the village government and the "public health center" collaborate in providing empowerment to the community. Based on the results of interviews with six informants, it is known that the village government and "puskesmas" collaborate in providing empowerment to the community. This is in accordance with previous research which states that there needs to be cooperation between all sectors, both government and stakeholders, to have a shared commitment so that no area is red and the desired target is achieved (Aprianto, & Tarnama, 2022).

The role of Government as a Facilitator

The role of the government as a facilitator is to create favorable conditions in the development process to bridge the various needs of the community. In this case, the facilities that can be provided by the village government to overcome stunting problems include infrastructure and a village budget to fund each program in an effort to reduce the incidence of stunting (Amelinda, & Haryani, 2023).

The village funds provided by the government allow villages to utilize these funds to finance the implementation of village government, development, and community empowerment. The village funds are expected to overcome and support the acceleration of stunting reduction (Arfiansyah, 2020).

"The budget from the village head specifically for handling stunting already exists, but the budget is not given to the health center, so the budgets of the health center and the village head are different. There are two budgets given to health centers, the Health Operational Assistance budget provided by the ministry of health and the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget budget given by the Government of Surakarta" (KI2).

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"Village deliberation meetings are held to see data on the number of stunted children in a particular year in each area of Panjang Village. The budget allocation is not only given to stunting children but also given to pregnant women in a particular year. This aims to anticipate mothers who give birth with stunting children so that the budget funds issued consist of the number of stunting children will be added to the number of pregnant women in a particular year." (T12).

Based on the interview results, it was found that the budget used by the health center came from sources other than the village head's budget, but also the health operational assistance budget and the regional revenue and expenditure budget. Meanwhile, the village government experienced budget constraints for handling stunting, and the budget came from the city government. However, Pajang Village received a grant from the UAE which helped the village government in handling stunting. The village government needs to improve the budget structure to be more structured and detailed so that all the needs for each stunting handling activity can be met. In line with previous research which stated that the village government needs to improve the good budget management system so that the presentation of financial reports can be more detailed (Arfiansyah, 2020). This is in accordance with other studies which explain that inappropriate village fund management will be an obstacle in the use of village funds, so that village funds for stunting handling programs are less appropriate and not optimal. Therefore, improvements are needed in the governance of village funds so that all needs in handling stunting can be met (Handayani & Arianto, 2022).

The availability of infrastructure in handling stunting cases must be maximized. Optimal facilities and infrastructure will enable health programs to be more effective in achieving their goals and have a significant positive impact.

"The village intends to organize stunting counseling activities by inviting various resource persons. In addition, when the health center provides interventions related to Supplementary Feeding, the village government will assist with the intervention." (K12)

"The assistance provided by the village is in the form of seminars and coaching, as well as "Kantong Gizi" Programs and the provision of supplementary feeding boxes." (K13)

"One of the forms of attention given by the village to Family Empowerment and Welfare is helping if there are obstacles in providing egg assistance." (K14)

"Assistance provided to the community in the form of providing socialization and education related to stunting is not in the form of facilities. In addition, assisting in the "Nutrition Pouch" Program, egg assistance, milk provision, and supplementary feeding" (T11)

The results of interviews with the three informants showed that the village government provided assistance in the form of infrastructure only, while the village government did not provide infrastructure. This is supported by the statement of the informant (T11) that the assistance provided by the village government was in the form of providing socialization and education, as well as helping with the stunting handling program. The availability of infrastructure alone is not enough to optimize every stunting handling activity, so supporting facilities are needed so that these activities can be maximized. This is in accordance with previous research which stated that with good facilities and infrastructure, it will make it easier for the community to get optimal health facilities so that later it will make it easier for the government to implement the planned program so that it can be implemented according to the goals to be achieved (Suhroh, & Pradana, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The role of the government as a regulator has been running well, as seen from the optimal planning, implementation, and evaluation in handling stunting. The role of the government as a denominator is seen in providing education and training to nutritionists, cadres, and the community. Meanwhile, the role of the government as a facilitator has not been running optimally because there are still obstacles in managing the budget related to stunting and the lack of facilities provided by the village government.

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