

## Research Article

# Increased Poverty: The Failure of Government Programs and the Natural Resource Factor

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**ORCID**Suprianto: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-2260-0261>**Abstract.**

The Indonesian government, including local governments, has spent large sums of money and many programs to reduce poverty. However, in several regions in Indonesia, the number of poor people has increased, as in Central Kalimantan, where the poverty rate has increased in the last three years. The number of poor people in Central Kalimantan in 2020 is 132 thousand people; this number increased to 140 thousand people in 2021, then increased again to 145 thousand in 2022. Research on poverty has been carried out in Indonesia. However, research analyzing poverty caused by natural factors and mismanaged government policies has not been carried out. This research was conducted to analyze poverty in Central Kalimantan between state policy governance factors and natural factors. The research uses analytical qualitative methods and case study designs. The analysis uses the new institutional theory and the natural resource curse theory. The research finds that mistakes in managing government policies (structural dimension) and nature (natural dimension) are factors that both play a role in increasing poverty in Central Kalimantan. As a practical suggestion, the government needs to make more intense and detailed efforts to alleviate poverty in Central Kalimantan that are adapted to natural conditions.

**Keywords:** poverty in Indonesia, poverty programs, the curse of natural resources

## 1. Introduction

Poverty is an issue that never ends for research and discussion. In Indonesia, poverty is an issue that continues to be discussed. Almost every ministry has programs that seek to promote poverty alleviation. Not only at the central level, poverty alleviation programs are also implemented by provincial, district/ city and village governments. Much of the government's budget is spent on poverty alleviation programs. The number of programs implemented, and the funds expended, do not automatically make poverty alleviation successful. In many studies, poverty alleviation programs reap various problems. Such as irregularities that occur in poverty alleviation programs [1].

There are various government programs to reduce poverty, some are in the form of direct assistance or grants, such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), and others [2]. There

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are also economic empowerment programs such as Joint Venture Cooperatives (KUBE), and the like [3]. These social assistance programs from the government have created dependence on the government for the poor [4]. The amount of social assistance and government grants spent on reducing poverty in 33 provinces in Indonesia, from 2005 to 2017 also did not have a significant effect on poverty reduction [5]. Government spending to finance social protection has also had no effect on reducing poverty in the last 10 years [6]. Regional government spending also does not have a significant impact on poverty reduction [7]. Economic growth also does not have a significant impact on poverty alleviation in Indonesia, because economic growth is still being enjoyed by the upper middle class, rather than the poor [8].

It is undeniable, in Indonesia there has been a dynamic of decline and increase in poverty in the last five years. The poor population decreased to 9.315 percent in 2019. This figure increases to 10.14 percent at the start of 2021. There are 27.7 million poor people in Indonesia in 2022 [9]. Micro, small and medium enterprises have a significant impact on reducing poverty in Indonesia [10]. Although there is a reduction in poverty, there are other problems faced in reducing poverty. There are large disparities in poverty reduction, at the national and regional levels, at the urban and rural levels, between Java and outside Java [11]. This is evidenced by the many underdeveloped areas, so the government created a special ministry that handles underdeveloped areas. Many underdeveloped areas are pockets and centers of poverty [12]. The more remote, and the further inland, the pockets of poverty are getting bigger and bigger in Indonesia [13].

Poverty in Indonesia is triggered by many factors, ranging from cultural issues, environmental and residential issues, to government policy issues that are inappropriate and cause poverty. Poverty is also triggered by poor public facilities and infrastructure, such as the lack of availability of electricity for residents [14]. Covid-19 has also caused poverty in Indonesia [15]. One of the government programs that has an impact on the poverty of rural communities in Indonesia is the certification of plantation land [16]. Increases in food prices also contribute to poverty, especially in rural areas [17]. Unemployment and low wages also trig poverty in Indonesia [18].

The problem of poverty continues to occur, as do the efforts made by the government. Many studies have been carried out regarding this matter. This research focuses research on Central Kalimantan, as one of the areas where poverty has increased in the last three years. The number of poor people in Central Kalimantan in 2020 is 132 thousand people, this number increased to 140 thousand people in 2021, then increase

again to 145 thousand in 2022. This research was conducted to uncover and analyze the increase in poverty in Central Kalimantan Province, from the governance factors of government policies or programs (structural aspects) and natural resource factors (natural aspects).

The failure of poverty alleviation from government programs occurred in Yahukimo Regency. The RESPEK program launched by the government was not optimally successful, did not run sustainably, so it failed [19]. The same thing also happened in Kampar Regency, Riau Islands. The poverty alleviation program by providing cows to the community on a rolling basis has failed. The failure was triggered by the unpreparedness of human resources who could train breeders in managing the cattle assistance provided [20].

This research was conducted to reveal the factors that encourage poverty in Central Kalimantan, namely factors related to the failure of poverty alleviation programs, and factors related to natural resources. Of these two factors, the failure of government programs is what drives poverty in Central Kalimantan.

## 2. Methods

This research uses an analytical qualitative model, analyze the increase in the number of poverties in Kalimantan when linked to government policies and programs, as well as natural resource factors. In Central Kalimantan, many government programs are implemented. Apart from that, Central Kalimantan also has large amounts of natural wealth. This research was conducted to analyze the increase in poverty and programs and natural resources in Central Kalimantan. Qualitative research was chosen in this research because it can explain the complex and multidimensional problem of poverty.

Qualitative research can also explain the actions of development actors in Indonesia, particularly in Central Kalimantan. According to André Queiros, Daniel Faria, and Fernando Almeida, one of the advantages of qualitative research is that it can be useful for explaining complex phenomena, as well as giving meaning to actions in certain contexts [21]. According to Michael Quinn Patton, qualitative research relies on the quality and credibility of the data collected by researchers [22]. The quality of qualitative analysis research is determined by the validation of the data collected and the methods used [23]. To ensure that the data collected by researchers is credible and of good quality,

researchers need to collect data from sources that are trusted and have authority and accountability related to the issue of poverty in Central Kalimantan.

Data collection techniques were carried out in three ways. First, document search. The data found through literature study on the official website of the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) was cross-checked with publications in online media. According to Anthony Onwuegbuzie, Nancy Leech, and Kathleen Collins, research with literature is a synthesis-research, because it does not stand alone [24].

Second, observation. Data collection was also carried out by conducting observations or direct observations of areas and locations that have become poverty alleviation activities in several regions in Central Kalimantan. Third, focus group discussion. After carrying out the observation activities, the researcher invited the parties related to the poverty alleviation program to have a limited and focused discussion.

TABLE 1: Interviewed informants in focus group discussion.

Num	Initial	Attribution	Gender
1	A-D	Officials within the provincial government	Male
2	R-M	Officials within the provincial government	Male
3	D-R	Officials within the provincial government	Male
4	E-H	Regional People's Representative Assembly	Female
5	S-M	Regional People's Representative Assembly	Male
6	B-K	Regional People's Representative Assembly	Male
7	Y-M	Academics	Female
8	E-D	Academics	Female
9	Y-H	Academics	Male
10	P-I	Journalist	Male
11	W-B	Journalist	Male
12	R-H	Journalist	Male
13	R-N	Non-governmental organization activist	Male
14	E-D	Non-governmental organization activist	Male
15	A-G	Non-governmental organization activist	Male
16	E-K	General public	Male
17	E-G	General public	Male
18	H-N	General public	Female

These three data collection techniques are a way to carry out cross-checking and triangulation in research. Triangulation was carried out on data sources and data collection techniques. One way to cross-check in qualitative research is triangulation. According to Veronica Thurmond, triangulation is a combination of at least two research perspectives, both related to methodology, data analysis, and data sources [25]. Triangulation in this research. The first data source is documents related to poverty data in Central Kalimantan. Documents were obtained from the publication of the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) website in 2023. After that, researchers went into the field to make direct observations of community activities and the location of poor communities in various locations in Central Kalimantan. And then researchers conducted focus group discussions with various informants within the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government, members of the Central Kalimantan Regional Representative Council, academics, journalists and non-governmental organizations, activists from government organizations, as well as the general public on the topic of poverty in Central Kalimantan.

This is relevant to the opinion of Margarete Sandelowski, about analytical qualitative research. According to Sandelowski, the process of qualitative analytical research is carried out by extracting facts, then identifying the main topics, creating dimensions of information content, and using a useful framework for data reduction [26]. The data collection steps carried out by the researcher were then continued with analysis of the research data.

The collected data was analyzed using the data analysis techniques of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, technical research data analysis was carried out in three stages. First, data reduction. Second, data presentation. Third, verification and drawing conclusions [27]. This research data reduction process was carried out by taking data that was relevant to the research topic. Data that is found but is not relevant is discarded or set aside. The data study step is carried out by narrating the relevant data that has been collected. Not only is it narrated in text form, but researchers also present data in the form of pictures and tables. From the data presented, researchers draw conclusions about the data. Previously, researchers conducted studies, analyzes and discussions empirically and theoretically. The theory used in analyzing the problem of increasing poverty, seen from government policy factors and natural resources, are new institutional theory and the natural resource curse theory.

### 3. Result and Discussion

The central and regional governments, including district/ city governments, have implemented many programs to alleviate poverty. This program has been running for a long time. There are also several new programs being implemented, especially by the provincial government. There are various poverty alleviation programs, some in the form of giving cash funds, in-kind assistance, some are in the form of facilities and guarantees, such as health. There is also empowerment and training in nature, such as skills and skills training for residents who want to run micro, small and medium enterprises.

TABLE 2: Poverty alleviation program in Central Kalimantan 2020-2022 (Source: Processed, 2023).

Num	Program	Program Form	Executor
1	Social Protection	Giving rice	Provincial government
2		Kalteng Berkah Scholarship	Provincial government
3		Help poor students	Provincial government
4	Indonesia Smart Card	Providing educational assistance money	Central Government
5	Healthy Indonesia Card	Health Services for free treatment	Central Government
6	Regional Insurance Health	Health Services for free treatment	Every district/ city in Central Kalimantan
7	Hope Family Program	Cash money	Central Government and Central Kalimantan Provincial Government
8	Empowerment of the Poor	Training and providing capital for micro, small and medium enterprises	Provincial government

Central Kalimantan is known as a province that is rich in natural resources. One of the biggest natural resources in Central Kalimantan is coal. Coal in Central Kalimantan is found in almost all districts/ cities in the Central Kalimantan region. Central Kalimantan also has a very wide tropical forest. Forests in Central Kalimantan have great potential in terms of forest resources and forest products. These resources can play an important role in the regional economy and contribute to various sectors. There is also oil, gas and minerals, as well as oil palm plantations.

Besides being rich in natural resources, Central Kalimantan also has many natural disasters that often occur and threaten life as well as environmental sustainability. Natural disasters that often occur in Central Kalimantan spend a lot of the government's

TABLE 3: Natural resources in Central Kalimantan (Source: Processed, 2023).

Num	Natural Resources	Area	Potential Benefits
1	Coal	North Barito Regency	Contribute to the regional economy.
2		South Barito Regency	Creating jobs and local development.
3		East Barito Regency	Contribute to the local economy.
4		Kapuas Regency	Contribute to the regional economy and create job opportunities.
5		Murung Raya Regency	Contribute to the regional economy.
6		Sukamara Regency	Contribute to the regional economy.
7	Oil and Gas	Murung Raya Regency	For the energy industries.
8		East Barito Regency	For the energy industries.
9		Katingan Regency	For the energy industries.
10		Seruyan Regency	For the energy industries.
11	Forests and Forest Products	North Barito Regency	Hardwood, rattan, forest fruits, and traditional medicinal ingredients.
12		South Barito Regency	Timber has economic value, non-timber forest plants such as fruits, herbs and spices.
13		Kapuas Regency	Wood products, agarwood, ironwood have economic value.
14		Lamandau Regency	Wood and processed wood materials.
15		Sukamara Regency	Wood and processed wood materials.

budget for handling them. Disaster management costs that occur are related to handling human victims directly, in the form of food, medicine, evacuation costs, and other needs, including costs for dealing with houses or shelters damaged by the disaster. The government also has to spend money to rehabilitate the natural environment damaged by the disaster. This absorbs a large amount of budget. The bigger and more frequent the disaster, the bigger the budget spent. The wider the spread and impact caused by natural disasters, the greater the costs that must be borne by the government.

Ironically, having to get a lot of poverty alleviation programs, and being rich in natural resources, poverty in Central Kalimantan has increased in the last three years. From the data released by the Central Kalimantan Statistics Agency in 2023, the number of poor

TABLE 4: Natural disasters that frequently occur in Central Kalimantan absorb the government budget (Source: Processed, 2023).

Num	Disaster Form	the Cause	Impact
1	Flood	Uncontrolled deforestation. Bad drainage system.	Housing damage. Refugees. Infrastructure damage.
2	Landslide	Illegal logging. Unstable soil contour. Land use change. High rainfall.	Infrastructure damage. Damage to the natural environment.
3	Drought	Climate change. Land use change. Decrease in water quality.	Plants and vegetable crops are damaged. Failed to harvest agricultural commodities. Lack of clean water.
4	Forest and Land Fires	Long dry season. Land clearing by burning.	Air pollution. Disturbing health. Limited outdoor activities.
5	Strong Winds and Storms	Natural factor	Fall of trees. Infrastructure damage.
6	Environmental Pollution	Mining activity. Industrial waste.	Damaging the ecosystem. Contaminate clean water. Air pollution.

people in Central Kalimantan in 2022 is 145.10 thousand. This number has increased from 2021 of 140.03 thousand people, or the same as 5.28 percent. The number of poor people in Central Kalimantan in 2021 has increased from 2020 as many as 132 thousand people, or an increase of 5.16 percent.

The failure to eradicate poverty does not only occur in Central Kalimantan, in many areas in Indonesia development failures also occur frequently. Like the failure of development in Sumenep Regency, East Java. The failure of development in Sumenep, East Java was due to poor planning and minimal public participation, so that what was built by the government did not match the needs of the people [28]. Many factors cause the failure of poverty alleviation in Indonesia. One of the factors causing the failure of poverty alleviation is the community's dependence on government assistance. This is exacerbated by the low level of public education, especially those living in rural areas [29]. Poverty is also triggered by the low access of the poor to various basic services and banking services [30]. Government programs that focus on social assistance are also one of the reasons for the failure of poverty alleviation [31]. The failure of poverty alleviation has been triggered by government programs that are oriented towards reducing the number of poor people, rather than reducing the number of poor people directly [32].



The many failures of poverty alleviation need to be looked at more thoroughly and in depth. Empirical and theoretical analysis is needed. Theoretically, the failure of poverty alleviation, and the increase in the poverty rate in Central Kalimantan in the last three years, can be analyzed with the new institutional economic theory. In the new institutional theory, there are four elements that must exist in economic activity. This refers to the opinion of Oliver E. Williamson. According to Williamson, the new institution includes saving which consists of, first, saving which includes norms, habits, traditions, including religion. The second, is the institutional environment, the work function of the government bureaucracy, including executive, legislative and judicial institutions. At this level there is a need for a firm and clear legal system for private property. The third, governance institutions of government. The fourth, is the allocation of resources and employment opportunities [33]. In Williamson's new institutional theory, there are needs to be governance implemented by the government that allows existing resources to be properly distributed, thus creating job opportunities at the grassroots level. This can be done if the implementation is based on laws that recognize individual ownership and accommodate the traditions, customs and norms that apply in society. According to Williamson, it is necessary to have a contract for all activities carried out by the government. This is part of good governance and a legal dimension [34].

The new institutions put forward by Williamson are included in the structural aspect of poverty alleviation in Central Kalimantan. The government as an institution whose role is to carry out poverty alleviation programs does not carry out clear rules of the game, especially for actors or implementers. This is prone to cause the problem of moral hazard. Implementers of poverty alleviation, are not given rules regarding the technical implementation. Such as meeting and coordination activities as well as ceremonial comparative studies. This is one part of the activities that spend a lot of government budget, including the budget for poverty alleviation.

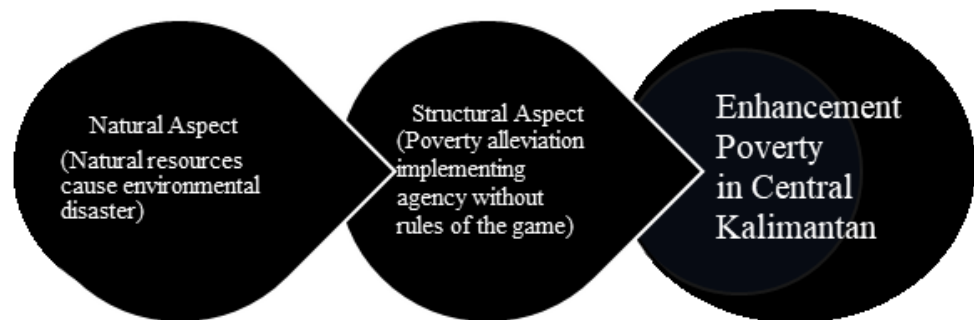
This was emphasized by the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform of the Republic of Indonesia, Abdullah Azwar Anas. According to Anas, the poverty alleviation budget reaches IDR 500 trillion, spread across various ministries and state agencies. However, most of the budget is used for meetings and comparative studies, rather than the poverty alleviation activities themselves. Meetings and comparative studies are increasingly being held towards the end of the year. It is intended to spend the existing budget. Each party is busy with their own affairs, and ultimately ignores poverty alleviation targets [35].

The poor governance of the poverty alleviation program without the rules of the game in the government bureaucracy in Central Kalimantan is exacerbated by the existing natural resources in Central Kalimantan, instead it has a detrimental impact on the people in the region, because the existing natural resources are massively exploited, extractive and does not pay attention to sustainability aspects. The impact, natural disasters occur, including floods, landslides, droughts, and smoke disasters due to forest fires.

This can be analyzed using the natural resource curse theory. The natural resource curse theory refers to the opinion of Richard M. Auty. Auty said that many countries in the world have natural resources, but inversely proportional to the low income of citizens [36]. Developing countries that have natural wealth in the form of oil and gas, timber, minerals, agricultural products, etc. experience a deficit in welfare and economic growth [37]. The development of industrialization in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, which have a wealth of natural resources, actually causes poverty [38]. The resource curse does not only apply to developing countries. Several advanced industrialized countries rich in natural resources exploited by large companies also have a negative impact on economic growth [39]. The natural resources owned by the state are a curse because personal interests are more dominant to benefit from the existing potential [40]. These personal gains make political actors seek to perpetuate power, and create political corruption [41]. This condition further strengthens the existence of a very strong relationship between economics and politics [42]. The use of personal interests by development actors, the government bureaucracy gets wealth from natural resources when people's welfare is minimal [43]. Apart from the personal interests of the implementing actors, another thing that makes natural resources have a negative impact on welfare is that natural resources are exported in the form of raw materials [44]. Extractive economic policies towards natural resources in Africa, America, Asia and Europe have a negative impact on society [45]. The same thing also happened in Indonesia, oil and gas natural resources have become a curse for the people of oil and gas producing regions [46].

Referring to the theory of natural resources which is a curse in Central Kalimantan, it is a natural aspect that triggers the failure of poverty alleviation. The abundance of natural resources in the form of coal actually causes drought. The extent of the forest that produces wood and forest plants, instead causes landslides and floods. The large amount of oil palm land as a source of oil production, in fact, causes forest and land fires. The large amount of natural wealth in Central Kalimantan does not correlate positively

with poverty reduction, in fact, the opposite is true. Stated that natural wealth is a trigger for increasing poverty, as a form of development failure.



**Figure 1:** Factors driving poverty increase in Central Kalimantan (Suprianto, 2023).

Both aspects, the structural aspect, the governance of the poverty alleviation program by the bureaucratic apparatus of the Central Kalimantan Provincial government which was carried out without rules of the game, and the natural aspect, the natural wealth owned by Central Kalimantan, precisely led to natural disasters, became a trigger for increasing poverty.

## 4. Conclusion

Poverty in Central Kalimantan has not decreased in the last three years, on the contrary it has shown an increasing trend. This is caused by governance factors of government programs that are not running well, not integrated, or out of sync between central government programs and local governments. This is also exacerbated by natural conditions in Central Kalimantan where natural disasters often occur. Natural disasters such as floods, landslides, droughts, etc. spend a lot of the government's budget when a disaster occurs.

The practical suggestion, government programs related to poverty alleviation need to be studied holistically before being implemented in the regions. In addition, poverty alleviation programs need to be discussed in advance with all stakeholders, not suddenly appear and be implemented, so that their implementation is more targeted, effective and has a broad impact. One more poverty alleviation program that will be implemented must be adapted to natural conditions, so that there is no waste, in vain and a waste of the state budget.

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