

Indonesian Challenge in Implementing Rural SDGs Program: Case Study Structural Poverty in Tangga Barito Villages, Boalemo Regency

Ade Ayu Astuti

Master's Student Public Administration in International Development, School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, adeayuastutii96@gmail.com

Abstract

Economic and infrastructure development that focuses on developing urban areas also increases poverty disparity between urban and rural areas. As a result, most rural communities live in poverty due to limited access to primarily infrastructure services. Among 17 sustainable development goals, no poverty is the first target globally because this has a crucial position in realizing other targets such as education equality. Decentralization has implications for the authority of local governments in formulating policies to improve people's welfare based on Law 23 of 2014. However, the development gap among Java and other islands in Indonesia causes poverty, such as the Boalemo Regency, one of the poorest regents in Gorontalo Province. This study applies the qualitative method to investigate the empirical challenges of the Indonesian Poverty Alleviation Policy implemented in the Priority Program of the Village Fund. After analyzing empirical data from 80 questionnaires and public documents, structural poverty in Tangga Barito related to the development gap of public infrastructure. *Meanwhile*, realizing rural SDGs face some challenges culturally and structurally, such as gender inequality and limited human resources both externally from the community and internally from a village government organization.

Keywords: Structural Poverty; Rural Sustainable Development Goals; Tangga Barito Villages; Village Fund Program

1. Introduction

Eliminating poverty in 2030 is one of the international agendas in the SDGs program, but unpredictable condition pandemic COVID-19 has been increasing poverty in whole countries. Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021 reports that 1.1 billion poor people live in rural areas, and about 209 million live in urban areas (UNDP & OPHI, 2021). Meanwhile, Indonesia's development causes disparities between urban and rural areas among islands in Indonesia. East regions in Indonesia have the highest poverty rate, such as Sulawesi and Papua. In 2021, Indonesia's most poor live in rural areas, about 15,51 million people, and more than 55% depends on the agricultural sector, with a relatively low level of income if compared to people living in urban areas (BPS,2021a). This report shows that regional areas have not been handled adequately and are far from access to development, very vulnerable to

become poverty. Income disparity is closely related to the productivity of Indonesian farmers, which cannot separate from various factors, including the area of land owned, government policies in terms of providing incentives to farmers, and unequal ownership of assets.

Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, Indonesia has implemented various programs through partnership across sectors in poverty reduction. This effort is also supported by allocating a budget from State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN) and partly from loans from foreign donor agencies. However, many programs are unfocused and irrelevant towards poor people and cause poverty reduction targets are still challenging to achieve. Indonesia's government trade policy to import rice from Thailand is around 1 million tons in the following four years (Surya, 2021), increasingly difficult for the agricultural sector, especially during the harvest period that reduces the price of grain and rice in the market. Large food imports have also worsened the trade balance and made Indonesia progressively dependent on imported food. Under these conditions, it is clear that macro and trade policies are impartial towards farmers. Difficulty accessing credit, small budget allocations to build agricultural supporting infrastructure and the absence of subsidies, and the scarcity of fertilizers during the growing season and demanding in marketing are some facts on the ground that discriminate against agriculture.

Sulawesi Island has 1.55 million poor people who live in rural areas, and the highest percentage among the six provinces is almost 15.61 percent, located in Gorontalo province (BPS, 2021). Realizing SDGs goals should consider the development of rural and the agricultural sector, such as Gorontalo that 17.680 peoples work in the agriculture sector (BPS, 2020). However, before implementing poverty alleviation in farming communities, it is necessary to first identify in depth what factors are the causes of the emergence of poverty in these communities. SDGs from villages is an Indonesian priority program in 2021, thus researching in rural is necessary to accomplish national and global targets concerning zero poverty. Investigating challenges in realizing rurally Sustainable Development Goals become the main reason this study selects Tangga Barito villages in Boalemo Regency as a very backward village in Gorontalo Province (KDPDTT, 2016). This study will adhere to three questions, how is the structural poverty condition in Tangga Barito village? Second, what are the factors that cause structural poverty in this village? Last, what are the challenges in implementing rural SDGs and accomplishing rural without poverty?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Structural Poverty

Poverty is a multidimensional concept that seeks to measure levels of deprivation encountered by a person, household, or community, either lack of resources such as income and assets, capabilities such as skills, knowledge, and technology, or both (Touray, 2016). Due to lacking job opportunities, economic structure, and education, most poor people tend to be poorer. Poverty should perceive as something structural by nature, individuals are somehow victims since the constitution of poverty, its characteristics, and causes are not principally individualistic (Daas, 2019). Structural poverty causes some groups to suffer because the social structure in the community excludes them from managing the sources of income (Selo, 1984).

In rural areas, the hallmark of structural poverty is the emergence of a strong dependence between the poor to the socio-economic class above them (Mochtar, 1994). As a result, the poor cannot do much about the exploitation and marginalization process because there are no

alternative options to determine their fate in a better direction (Rachyuningsih, 2007). The absence of more pro-agriculture policies such as lower fertilizer prices, import restrictions, and market access cause farmers to become powerless and lead to structural poverty (Lukman, Bagong, & Freddy, 2008). Thus, structural poverty is closely related to the interaction between the bureaucracy, regional autonomy, initiatives from the community, and the people themselves, including the poor. Implementation of a development program must consider public community participation, implementor apparatus, and the method in delivering policy. Therefore, this study will investigate structural poverty and the reason for this condition in Tangga Barito villages.

2.2 Indonesian Poverty Alleviation's Policy

Poverty reduction strategies can no longer be seen from one dimension (economic approach) but require a complete and comprehensive diagnosis of all aspects that cause poverty locally. In Indonesia, poverty has been on the policy agenda for a long time, with policy objectives for tackling the problem of poverty and elevating the status of the poor. Indonesia has some policies and programs on poverty reduction efforts based on empowerment, infrastructure, and capacity in rural areas, from central government to local government. The following table present the Indonesian Poverty Alleviation Program from the first president until the present:

Table 1 Indonesian Poverty Alleviation Program – part 1

No	President	Year	Program
1	Soekarno	1945-1967	National Development Plan 8 years
2	Soeharto	1967-1998	5 year Development Plan, I to IV [Sectoral and Regional program]
			5 year Development Plan, IV to V [Presidential Instructions Program Regarding Underdeveloped Villages
			Social Welfare Program
			Prosperous Family Development Program
			Prosperous Family Business Credit
			National Movement for Foster Parents
3	B.J. Habibie	1998-1999	Farm Credit
			Social Safety Net
			Urban Poverty Reduction Program
			Underdeveloped Village Supporting Infrastructure Development Program
4	Abdurrahman Wahid	1999-2001	District Development Program
			Social Safety Net
			Food Security Credit
5	Megawati Soekarnoputri	2001-2004	Urban Poverty Reduction Program
			Formation of Poverty Reduction Committee
			Urban Poverty Reduction Program

Source: Author.

Table 2 Indonesian Poverty Alleviation Program – part 2

6	Susilo B. Yudhoyono	2004-2014	Formation of Poverty Reduction Committee
			Direct Cash Assistance
			Sub-District Development Program
			Urban Poverty Reduction Program
			National Program for Self-empowerment of the Community (Rural Infrastructure Improvement Program & Rural Agribusiness Development Program)
			Community Empowerment Countermeasures Program
7	Joko Widodo	2014-2024	Smart Indonesia Program
			Healthy Indonesia Program
			Family Hope Program
			Food Social Assistance
			Non-Cash Food Assistance
			Village Fund Program
			Agrarian Reform and Social Forestry

Source: Author.

The above alleviation programs are the response of the Indonesian government to address the problem of poverty in Indonesia, both urban poverty and rural poverty. Hence, this study will investigate the challenge of realizing the Indonesian village fund program, especially rural SDGs.

2.3 Rural Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a bold, universal agreement to end poverty in all its dimensions and craft an equal, just, and secure world – for people, the planet, and prosperity by 2030 (UNDP, 2016a). All of the SDGs have targets directly related to the responsibilities of local and regional governments, particularly to their role in delivering primary services (UNDP, 2016). Therefore, the Indonesian government formulates Presidential Regulation No. 59 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of the Sustainable Development objective. This regulation contains 17 Sustainable Development goals, regulates the role of each ministry agency, and involvement of non-government stakeholders, such as civil society groups, academia, philanthropy, and business actors, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Admin, 2020). This policy then localized to province, regional, and village levels.

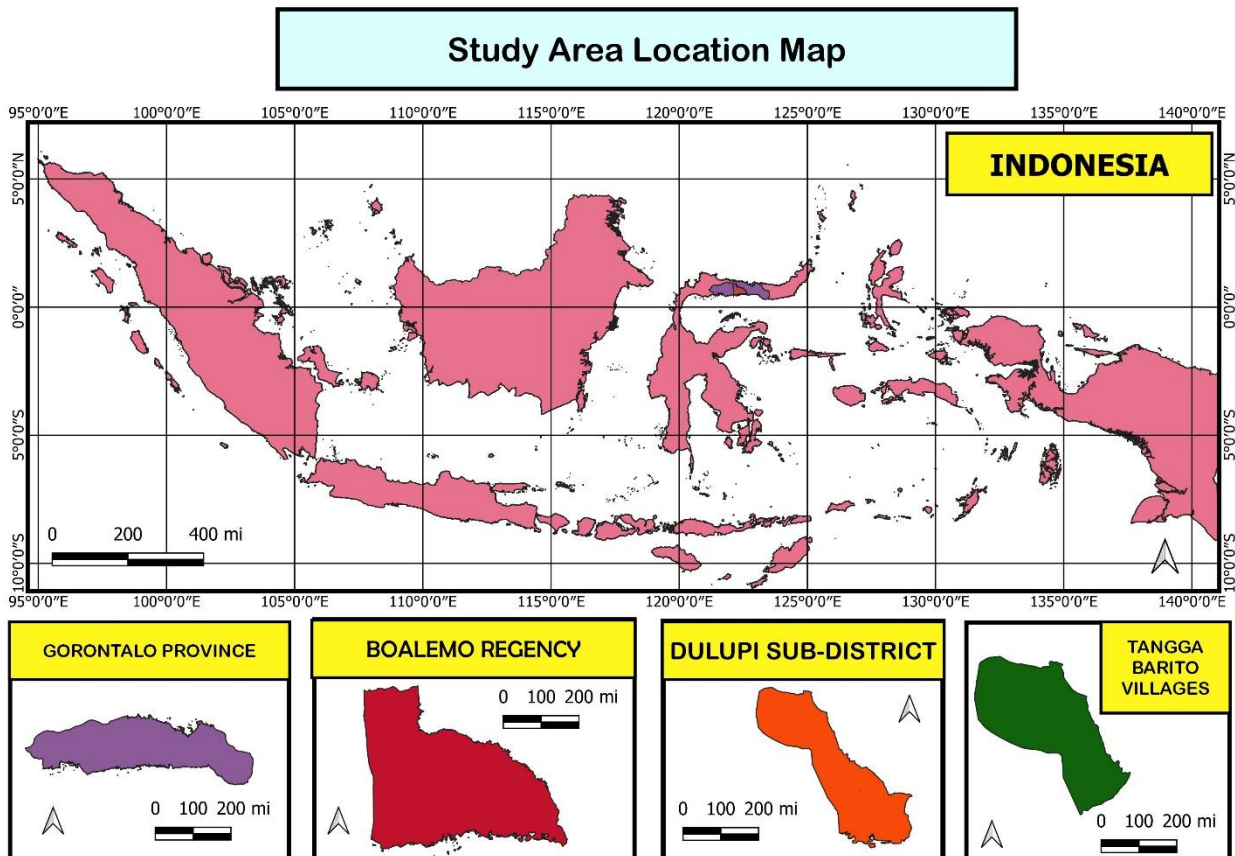
Village development can contribute 74 percent to the national sustainable development goals because Indonesia has 74,593 villages in 34 provinces (Iskandar, 2020). Indonesian Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration then localize these SDGs through regulation Number 13 of 2020 concerning Priority Village Funds for 2021 as a village reference in preparing annual activities and budgeting. The first target of the SDGs from the village is that by 2030 rural poverty will reach 0 percent. This target will directly realize the ASEAN program in sustainable rural development and Indonesia's 2020-2024 Medium-Term Macro Goals in Poverty Reduction to 7-8%. Hence, this essay analyzes

the empiric challenge in implementing rural SDGs, especially realizing rural without poverty in Tangga Barito village, Boalemo Regency.

2.4 Tangga Barito Villages

Dulupi District is located in Boalemo Regency and consists of 8 villages with definitive village status with the classification of self-help villages. Tangga Barito Village is the largest village in this district, geographically having an area of 169.70 km². The majority of this area in slopes or ridges form, with an average height of 172 meters above sea level. The village consists of 11 hamlets and 2469 residents with mainly work in the agriculture sector (BPS, 2021c). The following map showed the location of this village in Indonesia:

Figure 1 Study Area Location Map 1



Source: Author, own work.

3. Method

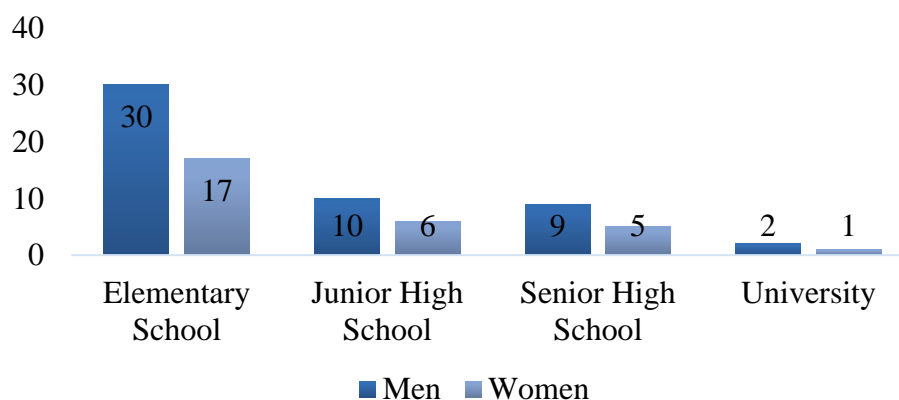
This paper will use a case study in analyzing Indonesia's social and education inequality focus on poverty in Tangga Barito Villages, Boalemo Regency. Case study research involves a detailed description of the setting or individuals, followed by data analysis for themes or issues (Cresswell, 2014). This study will use a qualitative method using quantitative descriptive

analysis tools and qualitative descriptive analysis. The data used consisted of quantitative data originating from questionnaires that will describe and qualitative data derived from document review and field observation. This study implemented a purposive sampling technique to attain information from the community. Therefore, this study distributed 80 questionnaires in Tangga Barito, Dulupi sub-districts, Boalemo Regency. Secondary data of this study are library research such as statistical reports, regional planning documents, research articles, and theories relevant to this study.

4. Results

Poverty has many dimensions, but its causes include unemployment, social exclusion, and the high vulnerability populations to disasters, diseases, and other phenomena which prevent them from being productive (UN, 2018). Structural poverty also includes a lack of education (Selo, 1984). There are three elementary schools and two junior high schools about 6km from settlement, but no senior high school, university. The nearest high school is about 15 km, while the university is only in the city of Gorontalo. Children who want to go to school must provide IDR. 20,000, - for round trip fare by motorcycle taxi, because there is no public transportation in this village. This cost is expensive for farmers who mostly have 3 to 4 children, while their daily income is only sufficient for their daily needs. Some families did not even have time to graduate from elementary school or even have formal education, especially the older generation. The limited income and many children certainly require farmers to prioritize their family's food needs over other expenses. As a result, most farmers only finish elementary school, and women get fewer educational opportunities than men. More than a half of respondents only finished elementary school, while only three farmers graduated from university, supporting the previous argument.

Figure 2 Education Level Respondent's in Tangga Barito Villages

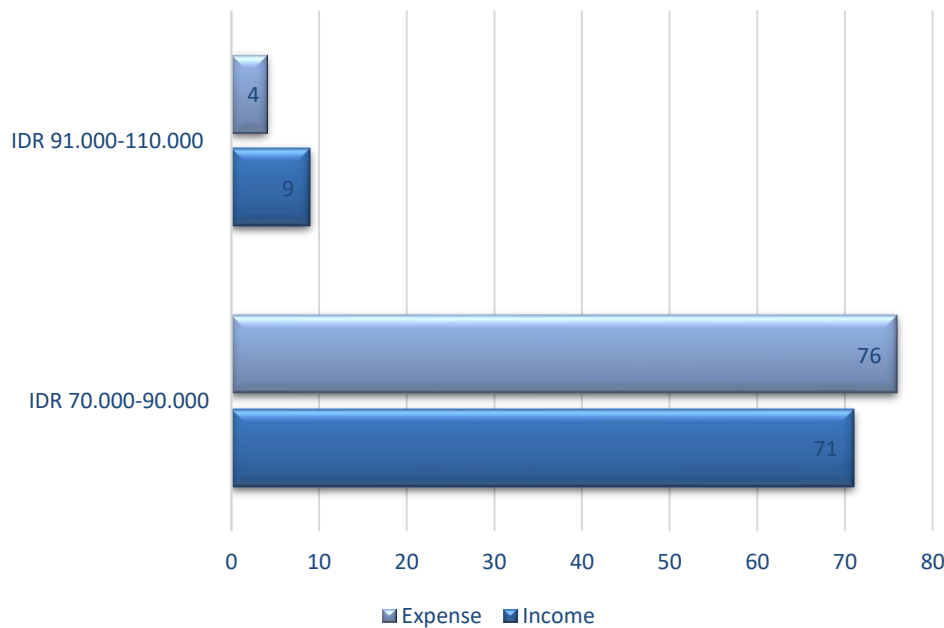


Source: Author, own work.

For housing conditions, based on field observations, it was found that there were significant differences in housing conditions between farm laborers and landlords. Landlords generally have houses with permanent conditions, electrified, and sufficient sanitation. While the laborer's house is small and not permanent, does not have a toilet, adequate air ventilation, and has a bathroom with inadequate conditions. Structural poverty also a lack of healthy

housing. Thus, farm laborers and farmers in this village, who generally live in houses with unsanitary conditions as described above, fall into structural poverty.

Figure 3 Daily Income/ Expense Respondent's in Tangga Barito Villages



Source: Author, own work.

A condition where a person's revenue is above the poverty standard but relatively low compared to community income categorize as structural poverty (Gunawan, 1999). Based on the data above, farm laborers in Tangga Barito Village earn a month around IDR 2,200,000 to 2,800,000. If using the poverty indicator from the BPS for Boalemo Regency, IDR 450,724/capita, then most farm laborers are not below the poverty line. However, when compared to the income of landlords, which reaches IDR. 10,000,000 per month, farm laborer's revenue is relatively low. This difference in income then forms a social layer, namely the landlord group and the farm laborer group.

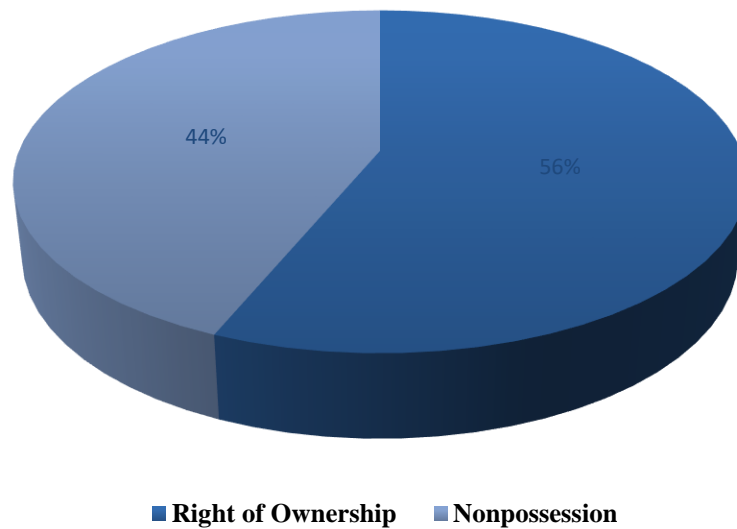
5. Discussion

5.1 Factors Causing Structural Poverty

Social stratification in society causes strong dependence among farm laborer and their employers. This condition also impacts each poor people to benefit from the government program. This structural injustice in society from these patterns of institutional organization that causing the emergence of structural poverty. Although 56% of respondents own their farmland, the cost of capital and production causes them to borrow from moneylenders. 44% of farmers also borrow from moneylenders to meet their daily needs because their jobs as laborers are uncertain. Consequently, almost 98% of respondents borrow money from money

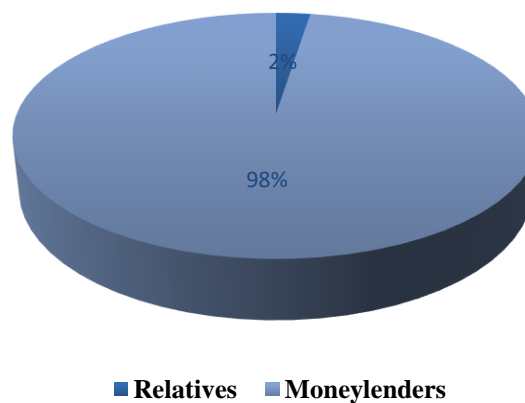
lenders because this place does not have a cooperative, and the bank is about 15km from this village.

Graph 1 Respondents Land Ownership Status



Source: Author, own work.

Graph 2 Borrowing Money When The Respondents Needs



Source: Author, own work.

The existence of structural constraints causes the poor to lack the desire to improve their standard of living (Lukman, Bagong, & Freddy, 2008). The prevailing social structure has given rise to obstacles that prevent them from progressing. In this case, all the difficulties that exist increasingly trigger this village community to choose not to continue their education because

education is expensive. If they have funds, they prefer to use them for farming capital. The problem of development inequality causes the unequal distribution of infrastructure, facilities, and public facilities, such as educational facilities, transportation, and roads, making it more difficult for villagers to get out of the poverty trap.

Based on field observation, The condition of public roads in this village is badly damaged, especially when rainy public roads are hilly, slippery, and rocky. This village also does not have health services, so people still give birth with traditional birth attendants. Infrastructure disparity causes various obstacles for residents in this village to get primary services. This condition supports the world bank statement that structural transformation in countries often corresponds to rural-urban divides (Dudwick, Hull, Katayama, & Shilpi, 2011). In this context, equitable access that is not accessible to all people in the village creates structural injustice because the people in this village lack fundamental rights. This condition becomes a factor causing the emergence of structural poverty.

5.2 Challenges in Implementing Rural SDGs

The Indonesian village fund program has been implemented since 2015 to develop and empower rural communities. Boalemo Regency also has formulated various policies and programs in rural poverty alleviation. In 2021, the government priorities this budget in realizing rural SDGs and dealing with the domino effect of pandemic COVID-19, especially rural poverty. Marginalized rural poverty, not only land distribution but also inequity in access to education, nutrition, and health, creates a considerable obstacle in accomplishing target zero poverty (IFAD, 2001). Although program implementation requires leadership, ICT skills, and financial management, human resources are the main challenge. The highest education level of village heads and village officials is high school graduates, without capacity in operating computer. The pathology in organization and village political intervention also impacts the accuracy and effectiveness of village fund programs. As a result, village strategic issues are not following budget planning so that they are not well-targeted, and the poor never benefit from these funds.

Digital transformation becomes an opportunity and challenge for local government in policy implementation. Updating village data is the first step in the Village SDGs program implemented from March 1 to May 31, 2021, to prevent corruption, collusion, and nepotism in the village (Maker, 2021). Digital gap, human resource capacity, overlapping, and discrepancies in data are barriers in policymaking (Nugroho, 2017) (Open Data Unit, 2017). Consequently, lack of synchronization in planning and budgeting rural SDGs. The uneven development of ICT infrastructure has hampered the development of information technology and individual capacity building in the village. Capacity building in accomplishing SDGs requires training and education in systems approaches to solutions, transdisciplinary initiatives, and codesign (Jaiyesimi, 2016). Providing internet network access and digital education for village officials and the community is also needed to increase community participation in the rural SDGs. The regeneration of visionary young leaders is essential in overcoming obstacles from old leaders who are not ready to adapt to technology and international program.

Concerning SDGs programs in realizing rural without poverty, the government must address some obstacles culturally and structurally. First, the low awareness of the community in fighting poverty, the majority of rural communities tend to receive aid without wanting to use it to provide proper education to their children. Local culture also assumes that when women reach puberty, they should marry to avoid being ridiculed by society (Pohan, 2017). Second, Many productive people are unemployed due to a lack of skills and education. Last, the region's

topography and the distance to the economic center require the government's attention to construct roads, health facilities, and schools.

6. Conclusion

This study explains social inequality in Indonesia from a sustainable development approach focusing on poverty cases in Tangga Barito Village, Boalemo Regency. After analyzing theories and empirical conditions, structural poverty in Tangga Barito related to the development gap of public infrastructure, while realizing rural SDGs face some challenges externally from the community and internally from a village government organization. First, structural poverty in this village is associated with limited access to education, low income, and limited access to healthy housing and sanitation. Second, two main reasons for structural poverty in this village are social stratification causes a strong dependence of the poor on the socioeconomic class above them, and development disparities in the fulfillment of primary public facilities. Last, some obstacles might prevent implementing rural SDs and accomplishing rural without poverty, such as gender inequality, lack of human resources capability, and infrastructure divide. Indonesian rural SDGs program this year is in the early stage of International SDGs target, so future research may want to extend this study by investigating document planning and interviewing related public organizations at the national and regional levels.

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