

Ending Poverty: Factors That Might Influence the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Indonesia

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Abstract

The eradication of poverty is the top priorities of the Indonesian government. This study examines the poverty reduction program in Indonesia within the framework of the global development agenda that is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the discussion focused on Goal 1 (No Poverty). This qualitative research offers a critical review of Goal 1 the SDGs in Indonesia by outlined some potential factors in achieving this gracious mission. And it can be highlighted that; converging of agendas; a collaborative-partnerships; well-established poverty reduction program, alternative funding like Zakat; the innovation of database; and learning from the best practice; are likely will be the key factors that might influence the achievement of SDGs.

Keywords: Indonesia, Poverty, SDGs, MDGs

1. Introduction

Poverty becomes an encumbrance for developing countries regarding their efforts to upgrade their status to that of a developed country. The existence of extreme poverty in several countries led to the foundation of a programme initiated by the United Nations (UN) and its member states. In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York, many countries announced a series of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were to be achieved by 2015 to address key global development challenges. This includes an expressed aim to reduce by half the number of people across the world suffering from poverty. However, according to the global monitoring report, this target was achieved by 2010, much quicker than expected (World Bank, 2013). While the MDGs appear to have succeeded, there are ongoing and significant issues that may interfere with efforts to improve and maintain this performance, such as environmental degradation.

Whilst the global population continues to grow, the natural resources that support human life,

such as energy, water, and food are becoming increasingly scarce. This scarcity is exacerbated by the problem of global warming with all its attendant implications, such as an increased likelihood of storms, floods, and droughts. If these environmental challenges are not controlled, they may, in turn, undermine the achievement of the MDGs. Therefore, the world needs to establish a new development model that can address this challenge. In response, the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 2012 inspired the birth of (SDGs), a sustainable development model that may help resolve world's problems following the end of the MDGs. The SDGs have broader objectives and are a sustainable approach with 17 goals, 169 targets, and 232 indicators (UN, 2017). This contrasts with the MDGs which focused on just eight goals, 18 targets, and 48 indicators (UN, 2000). Thus, the SDGs are intended to replace the MDGs; however, it cannot yet be known whether the achievement of the SDGs will surpass that of the MDGs, but it is likely that the existence of SDGs will at least mask the weaknesses of the MDGs.

Kumar et al. (2016) expressed deep appreciation for the performance of the United Nations and the organisations under its jurisdiction, which have been very active in many international development programmes since the late 1940s. For them, the MDGs and SDGs are two programmes amongst many and offer the most recent evidence of the seriousness of the United Nations in dealing with development issues. And it can be said that the SDGs are fully committed to the implementation of a national development agenda, mainly poverty alleviation program for all levels of society which will achieve substantial coverage of poor and vulnerable communities across the world by 2030, as it has stated in Goal 1-Target 3. And this is why governments are very optimistic regarding SDGs, as they recognise its intention to expand and strengthen an ending poverty programme.

The enthusiasm for SDGs is not just expressed by the government, many experts and researchers have also been vying to predict the fate of SDGs. Although the main agenda of SDGs is to end poverty, it also contain a number of diverse goals that are interconnected, which affects the repertoire of research conducted on SDGs from various perspectives and areas such as health (Proulx, Ruckert and Labonté, 2017), gender (Onditi and Ondera, 2016), climate change (Salleh, 2016), human rights (Lueddeke, 2015), energy (Weitz, Nilsson and Davis, 2014) and many others. Meanwhile, Liu et al. (2015) and Kamruzzaman (2016) are examples of researchers who directly address the topic of SDGs and poverty. However, none of all those researches promoted Indonesia as their main object of research, and it is hard to find study that examined the poverty reduction agenda in Indonesia within the framework of the SDGs. Therefore, by more focus on Goal 1 (No poverty) only, this research will address what factors that might affect the accomplishment of the SDGs in Indonesia? In so doing, this research may serve as an indicator or evaluation of the achievement of SDGs in Indonesia.

2. Methodology

This research is based on the qualitative data. The most crucial consideration when collecting data is concerns to the selection of participants, because to obtain precise and accurate data it is necessary to recruit participants who have the competence and the information needed. Therefore, the sampling technique that will be used by the researcher in this study is that of a

purposive sample. Maxwell (1997) argued that a purposive sample is a technique that involves recruiting a sample with certain characteristics, thus only respondents who possess certain skills, knowledge, opinions or abilities will be targeted. Thus, it is necessary to identify respondents who can help to address the problems above. And to assist the researcher in finding the desired respondents, specific criteria were used as a reference point. These are: (i) Being able to identify the poverty problem in Indonesia, (ii) At least knowing the achievements of the MDGs, and ongoing SDGs, (iii) Engaging directly with the coordinator or person in charge of the programme; (iv) Overseeing policies, including government policy. In line with the above parameters, the following can be considered as participants; members of government, researchers, academics, and NGOs.

Regarding the number of respondents, Patton (2002), stated that qualitative research is flexible in nature. Therefore, there is no definite rule concerning the number of participants who can be recruited. The number depends largely on what is considered useful and can be achieved given the available time and resources. In this research, each element required 2-3 respondents, so the overall number of respondents fell between 8-12 people. Moreover, considering the SDGs is relatively new and unknown in Indonesia, there was likely to be fewer respondents than this, but certainly every element will be represented.

Bryman (2012) argues that the collection of qualitative data can be conducted through observation, interviews, focus groups discussion, conversations, and documentation. In this study, the researcher collected data using interviews and documents. Interviews were therefore conducted using a semi-structured technique based on previously prepared interview questions. By using open-ended questions, the researcher enabled the interviewee to respond without having to answer in a certain way. Thus, the researcher acquired the knowledge, experience, opinions or perceptions of the interviewee, leading to rich and detailed information.

The use of documents as data covers a vast range of different source material. Documents can include: personal documents obtained from various sources, official documents from both state and private sources, mass media output, and internet resources (Bryman, 2012). However, these documents should be authentic, credible, representative, and meaningful (Scott, 1990). Thus, documents are one of the data sources that can be clearly accounted for, provided they are qualified.

3. Findings

Poverty has been positioned as the principal goal in the last two global development agendas. In the MDGs, poverty and hunger were combined in Goal 1, whereas in SDGs they were separated, with poverty remaining as Goal 1, and hunger listed as Goal 2. Therefore, by this transformation of goals it can be said that the SDGs constitute a new type of global development programme aimed at tackling chronic poverty following the success of MDGs, even though not all countries received the benefits of this success.

As a developing country with one of the highest population densities in the world, Indonesia has continued to struggle with poverty, although the situation is steadily improving.