

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES IN HANDLING THE HOMELESS IN LHOKSEUMAWE CITY

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Abstract

The emergence of homeless people in Lhokseumawe City is influenced by structural factors, especially the economic system that causes some people to be marginalized and unable to meet basic needs. Aceh Qanun Number 11 of 2013 concerning Social Welfare, specifically Articles 45 and 46 paragraph (1), requires local governments to address this problem. This study aims to analyze the Lhokseumawe City Government's policy in handling homeless people through the Social Service, and identify the obstacles faced. The method used is descriptive qualitative, with data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis is carried out through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the Qanun has not been effective, characterized by budget limitations, minimal facilities such as shelters, and a lack of ongoing development. External obstacles include cultural influences, minimal family support, and low public awareness. The conclusion of the study confirms that this policy has not been able to significantly reduce the number of homeless people. Recommendations include strengthening cross-sector coordination, and providing adequate social rehabilitation facilities to support the reintegration of homeless people into society.

Keywords: *Implementation, Policy, Handling, Homeless*

INTRODUCTION

Well-being is an ideal condition that every individual desires, including the fulfillment of various aspects of life's needs.(Faizal, 2024). Broadly speaking, welfare can be defined as a condition of life encompassing social, material, and spiritual aspects, characterized by a sense of security, morality, and inner and outer peace. This state enables every citizen to optimally fulfill their physical, mental, and social needs, both for themselves, their families, and their communities.(Nagaring, 2021)Social welfare issues are a difficult challenge to avoid, especially in urban areas. The presence of homeless people, beggars, abandoned children, and buskers in public spaces reflects the complexity of the social problems that exist.(Suharto, 2023)Homelessness is not only related to the problem of social inequality, but also relates to the complex realities of various problems. For example, economic problems, such as the fact that homeless people face income inequality.(Ayunda et al., 2020).Low incomes mean some people cannot afford basic needs, including adequate housing, forcing them to live on the streets in vulnerable and uncertain conditions. This inability to meet these basic needs pushes more and more poor people into seeking other ways to survive, including begging, vagrancy, or homelessness.(Tobing et al., 2024).

Based on Government Regulation (PP) Number 31 of 1980 concerning the Eradication of Vagrants and Beggars, Article 1, vagrants are defined as individuals who move around in public places, do not have a decent place to live or work in an area, and live a life that does not conform to local community standards. The government plays an important role as mandated in Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution which states that "Every citizen has the right to work and a decent living for humanity" and Article 34 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution which states that "The poor and neglected children are cared for by the state." With this legal basis, the government has a clear basis for implementing various programs and policies to improve the social welfare of the community, including efforts to address the problem of vagrancy as part of protecting vulnerable groups in society.(Khaerunnisa & Rokilah, 2024). Lhokseumawe City, located on the eastern coast of Sumatra between Banda Aceh and Medan, enjoys a strategic position as a distribution and trade center. Ongoing development has driven economic growth, but it has also created social challenges, particularly regarding the lives of marginalized

groups in public spaces. One prominent issue is the presence of homeless people in several strategic locations such as riyadhah parks, markets, and shopping areas. Based on Aceh Qanun Number 11 of 2013 concerning Social Welfare, specifically Articles 45 and 46, the Aceh Government and district/city governments are obliged to implement social welfare efforts to improve the quality of life for homeless people and beggars. Data on the number of homeless people is shown in the following table.

Table 1. Number of homeless people caught in raids

No	Year	Number of Homeless/Gepeng
1	2021	31 People
2	2022	22 People
3	2023	18 People
4	2024	30 People

Source: Social Services and Public Order Agency and WH of Lhokseumawe City

Based on these regulations, local governments are obligated to address the problem of homelessness. However, data from the Social Services Agency shows that the number of homeless people caught in raids continues to fluctuate, with 31 in 2021, 22 in 2022, decreasing to 18 in 2023, and then increasing again to 30 in 2024. This indicates that existing policies are not yet optimally implemented and that efforts to address this issue have not had a significant impact. In an effort to address and prevent homelessness, the Lhokseumawe City Government, in collaboration with the Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and the Wilayatul Hisbah (WH), conducted raids in various parts of the city. However, social welfare issues remain a challenging challenge, as evidenced by the continued presence of homeless people in public spaces such as traffic light intersections, city parks, fruit markets, shop verandas, and other public areas.

Despite this, the Social Services Department's efforts to address this issue have been suboptimal due to weak enforcement of sanctions and budget constraints. Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and the WH (Women's Welfare Movement) routinely conduct raids to control homeless people, but the lack of facilities such as shelters or shelters hinders their ongoing support and reintegration into society. The Social Services Department has provided various forms of assistance, including food and basic necessities, but the problem remains unresolved due to limited facilities and infrastructure and a lack of long-term support. This problem requires an in-depth evaluation of the implementation of existing policies, to ensure that homeless management programs are not only temporary measures, but are also able to provide long-term solutions through effective guidance, empowerment, and social reintegration.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in Lhokseumawe City, Aceh Province, which was chosen as the research location due to the ongoing problem of homeless people in public spaces. Despite the enactment of government regulations regarding the handling of homeless people by the Social Services Agency, their presence is still found, especially in Banda Sakti District as the city center. Furthermore, homeless people are also seen in Muara Dua District, especially in the Panggoi area. This condition indicates that the handling of homeless people by the Lhokseumawe City Government through the Social Services Agency is still not optimal. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method that allows researchers to describe and interpret data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data collected can be in the form of text, images, photographs, meeting notes, memos.(Muhammad et al., 2023)

The data collection techniques in this study consisted of three main methods. First, observation aimed to assist researchers in obtaining information or data directly depicting the phenomenon of homelessness at the research location.(Sugiyono, 2021)Second, unstructured interviews to obtain information from sources or informants regarding the handling of homeless people.(Wada et al., 2024)Third, data collection documentation was conducted in the form of notes, photographs, or official documents from the Lhokseumawe City Social Services. These three methods were chosen to help researchers obtain comprehensive data and information regarding the management of homelessness in Lhokseumawe City. The data analysis technique in this study uses the interactive model from Matthew and Saldana.(Matthew et al., 2014)Data analysis consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is carried out to filter and organize relevant and meaningful information so that it can more effectively support research findings. Data presentation is the stage of organizing information presented in the form of field notes or narrative text. The final stage is conclusion drawing or

verification, where researchers identify patterns, relationships, and deeper meanings, so that the resulting conclusions are not only relevant and significant but also aligned with the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF HOMELESSNESS IN LHOKSEUMAWE CITY

The presence of homeless people in Lhokseumawe city is caused by various factors, including poverty, family conflict, unemployment, and mental disorders. During the study, researchers divided homeless people into two groups: psychotic and non-psychotic homeless people.

1. Psychotic Homeless

Psychotic homeless individuals are individuals who live on the streets due to mental disorders, both mental and social, leading them to live a nomadic life, wandering, or being homeless. This group is included in the category of People with Social Welfare Problems (PMKS) who require special treatment, because in addition to experiencing neglect, they also have mental disorders that require integrated medical and social care. Therefore, cross-sector collaboration is needed between the Social Services Agency, Public Order Agency (Satpol PP & WH), the Health Agency, and mental hospitals to provide comprehensive treatment.

2. Non-Psychotic Homeless

Non-psychotic homeless individuals are individuals who lack permanent housing and decent employment, or who live nomadically and wander in public places. Their presence is generally driven by economic factors, such as poverty and unemployment, which lead to loss of livelihood and homelessness. This situation forces them to survive in public spaces, often by begging to meet basic daily needs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES IN HANDLING THE HOMELESS IN LHOKSEUMAWE CITY

Policy implementation is essentially an effort or step taken by various parties to achieve the objectives set forth in the policy. The presence of homeless people in urban areas is a classic problem that is difficult to address. In Lhokseumawe City, the government, through the Social Services Agency, is guided by Aceh Qanun No. 11 of 2013 concerning Social Welfare as the legal basis. Article 46 states that The Aceh Government and the Regency/City Governments are obliged to organize social welfare programs to improve the lives and decent living conditions for homeless people and beggars.

1. Physical, mental, social and religious development

Physical rehabilitation is a crucial initial step in addressing homelessness, given that many homeless individuals have precarious health conditions due to living on the streets without adequate access to food, shelter, and healthcare. This phase serves as the foundation for mental, social, and religious rehabilitation aimed at improving mindsets and behaviors, and fostering motivation to help them escape homelessness. In Lhokseumawe City, strengthening Islamic values is an integral part of rehabilitation, in line with the implementation of Islamic law, as vagrancy and begging are considered contrary to religious norms. However, observations indicate that this rehabilitation is not implemented sustainably by the Social Services Agency. Treatment is limited to bringing homeless individuals to the office, having them sign a statement, and providing brief rehabilitation during raids without follow-up. Afterward, they are sent home, making this method ineffective because it does not provide a deterrent effect or provide a long-term solution.

2. Health Services, Education & Skills Training

Healthcare is a crucial part of the recovery and physical development of homeless people, given that they live in conditions that make them vulnerable to disease and malnutrition. Limited access to basic healthcare services further marginalizes them compared to the general population. Therefore, the Department of Social Services needs to pay special attention to ensuring that homeless people, especially those without shelter, receive adequate healthcare as part of fulfilling their basic rights. This service also serves as a preliminary step before further interventions such as education and skills training are provided.

Education and skills training play a strategic role in addressing homelessness, with the goal of enhancing their skills to enable them to obtain employment opportunities and improve their overall well-being. This task is the responsibility of the Social Services Agency, which collaborates with the Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and the Community Empowerment Agency (WH) in the homeless control process. Following the control, the Satpol PP and WH hand over the homeless to the Social Services Agency for further guidance. However, the implementation of education and skills training has not been possible due to limited resources, both financial and in terms of facilities and infrastructure. One major obstacle is the lack of halfway houses for rehabilitation, which should provide a place for homeless people to receive guidance and training until they can overcome their social problems.

3. Providing employment and business opportunities

Providing employment and business opportunities for homeless people is a strategic step to address poverty and improve their well-being. The main objective of this program is to create employment opportunities that align with the interests, talents, and abilities of homeless people, thereby bringing about positive change and improving their social well-being. The Lhokseumawe City Social Services Department has attempted to implement policies related to providing employment and business opportunities for homeless people. However, these efforts have not been optimally implemented due to limited resources, including finances, facilities, and infrastructure. As a result, the handling of homelessness in Lhokseumawe City has been suboptimal. Based on Aceh Qanun Number 11 of 2013 concerning Social Welfare, Article 46 states that the Aceh Government and district/city governments are obliged to organize social welfare efforts to improve the quality of life for homeless people and beggars. However, in Lhokseumawe City, the provision of employment and business opportunities by the Social Service has not been realized, so that the handling of homeless people is not sustainable and long-term. This condition indicates that the implementation of the qanun in this aspect has not been optimal, even though the provision of employment and business opportunities is an important right for homeless people to improve their economic conditions and escape the cycle of poverty.

4. Social assistance and social assistance and repatriation to their areas of origin

Article 46 of Aceh Qanun Number 11 of 2013 concerning Social Welfare stipulates that the provision of social welfare for Persons with Social Welfare Problems (PMKS), including homeless people and beggars, is implemented through various forms of services, such as social assistance, assistance, empowerment, and repatriation to their areas of origin. This provision emphasizes that the government's role is not limited to enforcement but also encompasses comprehensive recovery and empowerment efforts. In Lhokseumawe City, social assistance provided to homeless individuals consists of staple food packages. This assistance is useful for temporarily meeting basic needs, but it fails to address the root causes that lead to homelessness. The limited frequency of assistance, which is only once a year, reflects constraints on budget allocation and policy priorities, thus severely limiting its impact on improving welfare. The assistance provided has not been able to reach all registered homeless people, especially those from outside the region. This is because the aid distribution policy focuses on Lhokseumawe City residents, while homeless people from outside the city cannot receive assistance due to limited reporting accountability to the Lhokseumawe City BPKP. Furthermore, the Social Services Agency faces obstacles in providing long-term development and empowerment programs. The response tends to be temporary, such as returning homeless people to their hometowns without ongoing coordination with the destination local government. As shown in the following table.

Year	Amount	Settlement	Note
2021	31 People	10 People	Returned to Parents
		6 People	Returned to the village Alue Awe Village, Pulo Rungkom, Pusong, Paloh Meria, Utenkot
		15 People	Returned to the North Aceh Social Services
2022	22 People	22 People	Data Collection Conducted
2023	18 People	18 People	Data Collection Conducted
2024	30 People	30 People	Data Collection Conducted

Source: Social Services and Public Order Agency and WH of Lhokseumawe City

Data shows that in 2021, 31 homeless people were caught in raids, with 10 returned to their parents, 6 to their villages of origin (Alue Awe, Pulo Rungkom, Pusong, Paloh Meria, and Utenkot), and 15 to the North Aceh Social Service. In 2022, 22 homeless people were only registered without any follow-up empowerment. In 2023, 18 people were recorded, and in 2024, the number increased to 30, all of whom were also only registered. The fact that

most homeless people come from outside Lhokseumawe City also complicates program follow-up, particularly due to the lack of coordination between regions. These findings indicate that the Lhokseumawe City Government has not been able to provide optimal services to homeless people and beggars as mandated by Article 46 of Aceh Qanun Number 11 of 2013. The main obstacle lies in the lack of shelters as essential facilities for temporary shelter, guidance, and empowerment. To date, there have been no concrete steps from the local government to build shelters or design sustainable treatment programs. This condition reflects that policy implementation is still ineffective and has not been able to have a significant impact on improving the welfare of homeless people.

Obstacles to Policy Implementation in Handling Homelessness in Lhokseumawe City

The Lhokseumawe City Social Service's homeless management policy, implemented as part of Aceh Qanun No. 11 of 2013, continues to be implemented, but the presence of homeless people in public spaces such as Riyadhah Park, markets, and shopping areas remains a common occurrence. Research shows that some homeless people caught in raids return to the streets due to the lack of long-term and sustainable management and empowerment programs. This situation is exacerbated by cultural factors and limited facilities and infrastructure.

1. Cultural factors

Cultural factors are a major obstacle to implementing policies to address homelessness in Lhokseumawe City. The predominantly religious community views providing direct assistance to the homeless as a form of worship and empathy. While they understand that the homeless' presence violates existing regulations, the belief that refusing to provide assistance is reprehensible makes it difficult to effectively implement government policies. This practice fosters homeless people's dependence on public charity, thus maintaining their presence in public spaces and making it difficult to empower them. Consequently, while the community's intention to help is well-founded, the methods employed do not support long-term solutions, but rather perpetuate the cycle of the problem.

2. Facilities and infrastructure

In policy implementation, the availability of infrastructure and supporting facilities is a crucial factor in ensuring the program's success. However, the Lhokseumawe City Social Services Department continues to face limited facilities and infrastructure, particularly the lack of shelters or halfway houses that serve as temporary housing and empowerment centers for homeless individuals who have been disciplined. As a result, homeless individuals caught in raids cannot undergo rehabilitation, as they are immediately released and directed back to their respective hometowns after being disciplined. This situation makes the problem of homelessness difficult to resolve comprehensively and has the potential to recur.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussions that have been conducted regarding the implementation of policies in handling homeless people in Lhokseumawe City, as previously described, it can be concluded that:

1. The implementation of Aceh Qanun Number 11 of 2013 concerning the handling of homeless people in Lhokseumawe City has not been effective. Based on research findings, efforts made by the Social Service are still limited to the stages of regulation and data collection, without being followed by follow-up programs as mandated in the Qanun, which include: a) physical, mental, social, and religious development; b) health services, education, and skills training; c) provision of employment and business opportunities; and d) social assistance, social assistance, and repatriation to their areas of origin. The absence of implementation of these programs means that homeless people do not have the opportunity to develop skills or open business opportunities that can help them escape the trap of poverty.
2. Obstacles to implementing homeless management policies in Lhokseumawe City include cultural factors, where generous communities tend to donate directly to homeless people. This habit makes homeless people feel comfortable and dependent on the community's compassion, making them reluctant to leave their situation. Furthermore, the lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure, such as shelters, also hinders the Social Services Agency from implementing empowerment and skills training programs for homeless people. As a result, the Lhokseumawe City Social Services Agency cannot optimally implement the management efforts mandated by Aceh Qanun Number 11 of 2013.

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