

# Gotong Royong: A Study of Poverty Reduction in East of Java (Indonesia)

## Gotong Royong: un estudio de reducción de la pobreza en el este de Java

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#### ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study is to analyze public services through Bhakti Sosial Terpadu (BST) of poverty reduction in East of Java. This type of research is a case study research that is descriptive qualitative. The results showed that BST has enormous benefit for Madiun society and governments. They are encourage a smooth communication between the district government and the society, increase the community participation in development, enhance self-help, improve public services in various fields, and improve welfare community.

**Keywords:** Gotong Royong, Bhakti Sosial Terpadu, Decreasing Poverty, public services

#### RESUMEN:

El propósito de este estudio es analizar los servicios públicos a través del Bhakti Sosial Terpadu (BST) para la reducción de la pobreza en el este de Java. Este tipo de investigación es una investigación de estudio de caso que es cualitativa y descriptiva. Los resultados mostraron que BST tiene un enorme beneficio para la sociedad y los gobiernos de Madiun. Fomentan una comunicación fluida entre el gobierno del distrito y la sociedad, aumentan la participación de la comunidad en el desarrollo, mejoran la autoayuda, mejoran los servicios públicos en varios campos y mejoran la comunidad de bienestar.

**Palabras clave:** Gotong Royong, Bhakti Sosial Terpadu, Alivio de la pobreza, servicios públicos.

## 1. Introduction

Poverty is a prevalent problem in the world, especially in developing countries. World Bank data on 2 October 2016 records that there are 767 million people or 10.7% of the world's population living below the poverty line by 2013. Indonesia is one of the countries which has not escaped from the problem of poverty yet. This is due to the extensive area of Indonesia, and most of them are the remote rural areas of the city center, so the rural communities are often left and untouched by development and equity (Budijanto, 2009). The weakness of entrepreneurial spirit, lack of equipment and machinery aid for farmers, and unbalanced access places also plays an important role to exacerbate the condition of Indonesian economy. The causes of this poverty problem are not only experienced by Indonesia alone, Romania also experienced it based on data in 2009 (Ignat et al., 2014).

East Java is the top province with the most impoverished population in Indonesia. There are approximately 4,775,000 low-income people in East Java. Some of them are in Madiun City. There are three villages in Madiun that are still classified as poor, namely: Tiron, Nranget, and Sambirejo.

Poverty can not be eradicated by the government without the participation of the surrounding community or society. The society can do many things to help the government in alleviating poverty. One of them is with "Integrated Social Service", or it can also be called "Gotong royong". *Gotong*

*royong* itself is a typical character or identity of the Indonesian nation that has been applied before the independence era in 1945. *Gotong royong* is excellent social engineering that is used by the state elites to regulate control over their citizens in participating in development (Suwignyo, 2019).

*Gotong royong* in terms of alleviating poverty is to explore the potential that exists in the community of Tiron Village, Ngranget and Sambirejo, especially the possibilities that exist in village associations that are already often held in the village. The associations are used as a means of counseling and providing assistance undertaken by the government and the community which ultimately become a means of gathering people to exchange ideas, information, and trade (Fahrudin, 2013).

One of the national goals, as stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, is the promotion of general welfare. It means that the state has an obligation for all citizens and nations to live decently and prosperously. Therefore, the country has to be able to provide excellent social services to the community.

Bhakti sosial terpadu (BST) is one of the *gotong royong* culture implementations which has existed in Indonesian society (Bowen, 1986). *Gotong royong* is an indigenous Indonesian culture that promotes solidarity and healthy social attitudes among the community. In this case, Parsons (1965) explains the life of an integrated community that can be seen in the presence of solidarity among them through helps without the need to reciprocate, such as the unfortunate or help other people in distress. However, this type of help is an obligation to reciprocate, especially in the case of work related to agriculture or when one of the citizens engages in celebration (Wynne, 2006). *Gotong royong* became a means of social engineering and an ingenious linguistic strategy by which state elites orchestrated control over the making of citizens (Suwignyo, 2019).

Similarly, if there is a work that results in the common good, then it takes the mobilization of each citizen through the job. The previous research on mutual aid was done by Rahayu et al. (2015), who examined the mutual assistance budgeting activities. Another research was carried out by Madlberger et al. (2016), who monitored collaborative activities related to bilateral cooperation. Different from previous studies, this study has a focus of study on social services that have an impact on poverty reduction in Java. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze public services through mutual cooperation like Bhakti Sosial Terpadu (BST) of poverty reduction in East of Java.

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## 2. Methodology

This type of research is a case study research that is descriptive qualitative. Therefore, this research sought to explore deeply into programs, events, processes, and activities against people or groups of people. Data collection was done in detail through several data collection procedures on an ongoing basis. This research tried to reveal the meaning of the BST program comprehensively as a revitalization model of mutual cooperation value in the globalization era.

The Data Collection techniques were participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation of participation was done at the time of implementation of Bhakti Sosial Terpadu. Observation was carried out to see a firsthand view and to get the complete data on the implementation of BST. In-depth interviews were conducted with various stakeholders such as Bupati Madiun policymakers, Bapeda officials of Madiun District, Sub-district Heads, Village Heads, and communities that are directly involved in BST such as, community figures, religious leaders, youth leaders, and ordinary people. Besides, the documentation technique was needed to support the observation data as well as in-depth interviews. Documentation aside from the official documents of the Madiun Regency government, the researcher also collected the data through video and camera recording and obtained documentary data from TV and media.

The data analysis technique used interactive analysis from Miles & Huberman, where analysis was done through 4 (four) phases; they were data collecting, data reduction, data display, and conclusion. Miles and Huberman (2002) state that the activity in the analysis of qualitative data is done interactively and run observation until completed, so the data is saturated. Activities in data analysis were named data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

In addition, the credibility test in this study used three techniques; those were an extension of observation, improvement of perseverance, and triangulation. Extension of observation was required if there were data that still needed further deepening. It is also very possible for the BST to be performed repeatedly in a long period. Increased perseverance was needed to examine more deeply, especially that was related to the synchronization of data obtained through observation, interview, and documentation. While triangulation of data in this research was needed in order to do cross-check data both from interview, observation, and documentation. Therefore triangulation in this research were triangulation method and source.

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## 3. Results

### 3.1. Implementation of *Gotong Royong* through Bhakti Sosial Terpadu (BPS)

BST is a flagship program of Madiun Regency government which has lasted for 16 years, started in 2000, survived, and developed until now. From the results of in-depth analysis, it was known why this program could survive for a long period. First, BST fits perfectly with the characteristics of Madiun Regency, which is mostly rural and even mountainous area. Madiun District of East Java consists of 17 sub-districts and 200 rural areas. Secondly, BST always gets an enthusiastic response from rural communities because there are rarely government leaders who want to go directly to the community. Third, BST is an appropriate tool for government leaders to deliver development programs directly to the community. Fourth, BST is also an appropriate means for government leaders to absorb the aspirations of the people directly. Fifth, BST increases community understanding of important skills and knowledge in increasing empowerment. Sixth, BST is an activity that can stimulate the growth of community participation and self-help. Finally, BST can inspire the city to develop because they feel leaders want to approach, embrace, spend time, contribute, and join the community they lead.

BST has succeeded in educating the community to participate in the development of their area. The city also dares to convey their aspirations so that political communication goes well and not dead. From the result of the analysis, the response from the village towards the implementation of BST was very positive. The positive response from the application of BST covers many areas such as good health, self-reliance, youth, agriculture, and women's empowerment.

BST can make people more advanced, improve their agricultural products, and improve the economy for better fisheries in the developing village Ngranget. Then, this youth program can awaken youth villages to do work for themselves.

In the case of community independence, Integrated Social Values have encouraged better growth of community participation and independence. BST negotiated with the village itself and fostered the spirit of mutual cooperation, the pillars of *agawe santoso*, and also a means of communication with local governments.

BST also encourages women to participate in community development. In Indonesia, women have made a significant contribution to community development through the PKK (Family Welfare Program), Dharma Wanita, Posyandu, Dasa Wisma, and religious activities that develop in the community.

There are many benefits of BST for women, such as lots of training, counseling, and services for women. The PKK needs training in sewing and cooking, especially training for the cassava chips industry, and the equipment.

In connection with youth activities, Integrated Social Vocations also encourage youth to participate in community and village development. BST's activities encourage young people to be active and therefore need assistance in independent business training.

BST is one of the innovations of the District Government of Madiun in the form of a community approach to improve communication and togetherness of the government and society in accelerating and economic development. BST is a "bottom-up" planning application with development activities carried out based on community proposals that are equated with the Madiun District Government program. BST is a vehicle for the preservation of joint cultural cooperation and a vehicle for political investment for the Bupati to realize the Bupati's vision of a mission towards an independent or prosperous village.

The purposes of BST are as follows: (1) to bring the service in various fields by the government for the community; (2) implementation of the community aspiration net, knowing the situation and the needs of the community; (3) encouraging community involvement to take an active role in development; (4) to increase the self-reliance of the community in the development, so that the sense of ownership of the development result will occur; and (5) preserving the culture of *gotong royong* in accordance with the motto of Madiun Regent "guyub rukun agawe santoso".

Concerning the revitalization of mutual cooperation values, Bhakti Sosial has succeeded in building and developing a spirit of mutual cooperation which has recently begun to fade away by the influence of individualistic and materialistic culture in the globalization era. The culture of *gotong royong* is clearly visible in BST activities, as shown in (1) the work of improving the infrastructure in villages such as improvement of the village road, normalization work of the secondary irrigation network, cooperation of tree planting or afforestation; (2) handover of worship places, scholarships (school equipment), livestock, fish seedlings, tree seedlings as well as vegetables and agricultural tools and others; (3) visit to the underprivileged home and acutely ill; (4) cheap groceries market (price subsidy of approximately 20-30%) for basic necessities such as rice, cooking oil and sugar; (5) free medical treatment such as internist, eye, surgery, radiology, family planning services and *Posyandu* for toddlers by Dinas Kesehatan (Health Department).

Other various activities implemented in BST are volleyball sports with government apparatus together with local villagers, counseling with government apparatus with village apparatus and local people, visiting the less fortunate or sick people, bhakti road pavement, KTP, KK, Birth Certificate, Driver's License, STNK, SKCK, Registration of TKI and Transmigration, Public Health Inspection Service, Cheap Market, Blood Donor, Family Planning Service, livestock health inspection, cattle injecting, agricultural extension, and others.

The culture of *gotong royong* at BST has had a tremendous impact on society and government officials. Physical contact contained in joint activities has caused significant psychological and sociological effects in the local community. Local people feel welcomed and valued so that their enthusiasm grows to participate in village development. Communities are also united because the leaders are willing to set an example directly and work together in developing villages.

As a program, the success of BST is influenced by several factors. The inhibiting factors in the implementation of BST are (1) territorial topography or the distance is quite far and difficult. Many areas of Madiun Regency are in the mountains with a relatively far distance, so it requires a struggle to be able to carry out the BST activities; (2) the activities seem monotonous; (3) many requests from community members through workshops that cannot be fulfilled because they have not been programmed in the current year's budget; (4) Climatic or rainy weather often hinders the implementation of BST.

Javanese and Indonesians, in general, have interesting social and cultural values from *Gotong Royong*. Each region in Indonesia has diverse characteristics, but substantially has very strong social bond and cooperation. *Gotong royong* is an original Indonesian term which means to do something together or make something to achieve results. *Gotong royong* culture are based on the following things: (1) human beings are bound by their social environment; (2) human beings need to maintain proper and harmonious relationships with others; (3) humans need to adapt themselves to the community members (Mardiasmo & Barnes, 2015). As delivered by Khasanah (2013), *gotong royong* has become a part of daily life in most of ethnic groups, it can also be referred to as the core of the cultural strength of Indonesian society that can be used as a foundation of the spirit and collective action to revitalize the values of togetherness in cooperation. Cooperation characteristics in Malaysia also have similarities within Indonesia. This was stated in Mutalib's research (2016), showing that community efforts in empowerment create interdependence by Eastern culture and philosophy in life.

*Gotong royong* also means shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand, or shoulder the burden together as part of collective self-empowerment to solve or overcome a problem, and also to reach the goal of the common good. *Gotong royong* contains the meaning of togetherness, equality, justice, and togetherness in solving problems to achieve common goals.

*Gotong royong* is voluntary assistance in helping others, but there are social obligations that force morally for someone who has received support will help those who have helped him so that this assistance becomes a habit and even become a widespread tradition into an extreme social order. This assistance does not have rewards like money or other materials but rather moral ties so that it becomes a moral task that will grow in society. This means that everyone who feels morally helped automatically has to help others, even in different areas of work. In this case, de Graaf & Tashadi (1987) affirm that the compensation asserted in the case of assistance is not realized with a certain amount of money, but the services that have been provided will ensure good family relations between those who are related or related due to an event. If compensation or assistance is realized with a certain amount of money, then there is social distance that will cause the inner values to be tenuous and ultimately encourage the value itself. This kind of event can occur in various places in rural areas now.

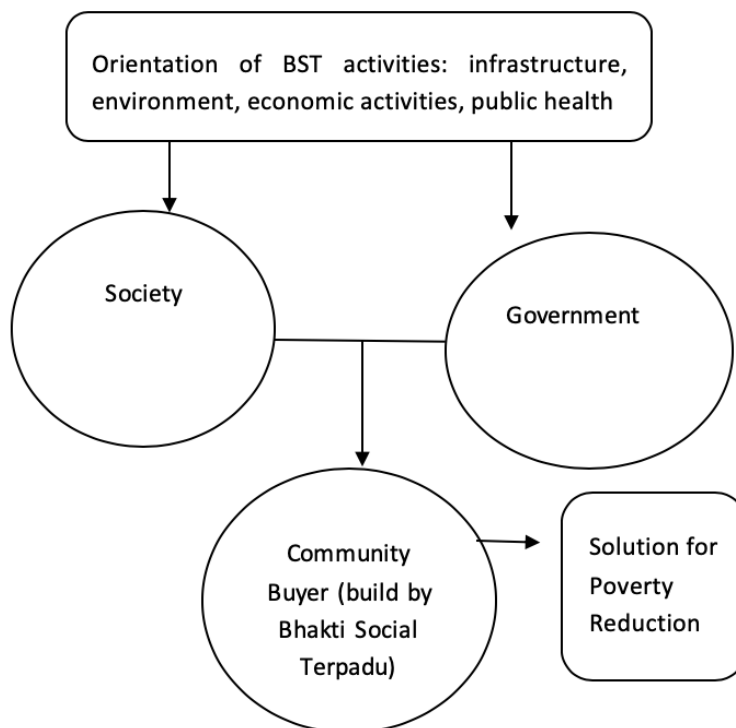
### **3.2. Social Services Based on *Gotong Royong* Values (Bhakti Sosial Terpadu)**

The solution to reduce poverty in Indonesia, especially in the Madiun region, is the implementation of *gotong royong* culture in social services provided by the government. BST is one alternative that can be taken to solve the problem. BST is a social service program where government and volunteers work with local communities to build the cities as a platform for local people to gain knowledge, insights and assistance from governments and volunteers to develop their economy.

BST is a bridge between the government and the community to communicate to find a way out for all kinds of problems that occur in society, especially those related to poverty. In practice, the government has an open and democratic dialogue with the local community to present their work plans, sources of funding and implementation. By implementing community service in the form of BST, the government is expected to be closer to the community so that the community feels to get more attention.

There are many activities of the Integrated Social Shelters. They include Bhakti Sosial paving road, Administration Service, Blood Donors, Cheap Market, Health Service, and Artificial Insemination (IB), *Posyandu*, Cake Making Training, and other 10 PKK Basic Program activities. The main objective of BST is to create communities in communities that gather regularly to share information, perform social services, and market-leading products in their area. From this association, it is expected that the city will form a new market that can sell their superior products, so the future society will be more eager to innovate products that can be sold in the market.

**Figure 1**  
Structured Solutions Diagram



Based on the results of the above research, overcoming the problem of poverty in Madiun District can be done with structured handling. Handling involves local communities, government officials, and communities that will be the target market or buyer. In the diagram above, the local community works with the government formally to create a new scope for community gathering venue that will sell and buy. So that, it will form an active community that can attract residents continuously outside Madiun region to come and buy their superior products. Finally, their products can be widely known and have an impact on increasing the economic level in Madiun Regency.

## 4. Conclusion

BST has enormous benefits for Madiun society and governments because they encourage a smooth communication between the district government and the society, increase community participation in development, enhance self-help, improve public services in various fields, and improve welfare Community. BST has succeeded in becoming a model to revive the *gotong royong* values in Indonesian society in facing the globalization era, especially in social service activities and rural community development. Therefore, a BST program is highly recommended for other regions in Indonesia and the world according to their respective regional characteristics.

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