

ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS IN IMPROVING EDUCATION PARTICIPATION IN NIAS DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of government programs, especially the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) and School Operational Assistance (BOS), in increasing education participation in Nias Regency. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation from various related parties such as teachers, students, parents, and education officials. The results of the study indicate that education participation in Nias Regency still faces significant challenges, especially those related to family economic factors, limited education infrastructure, and geographical distance between villages. The PIP and BOS programs have made a positive contribution to easing the burden of education costs, but have not been able to fully overcome the structural and cultural barriers that influence children's decisions to continue school. Therefore, a more contextual and integrated policy approach is needed, including improving school infrastructure, student transportation, and community-based family economic empowerment programs.

Keywords: education participation, Smart Indonesia Program, BOS, economic factors, infrastructure, Nias Regency.

ANALISIS KEFEKTIFAN PROGRAM PEMERINTAH DALAM MENINGKATKAN PARTISIPASI PENDIDIKAN DI KABUPATEN NIAS

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas program pemerintah, khususnya Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) dan Bantuan Operasional Sekolah (BOS), dalam meningkatkan partisipasi pendidikan di Kabupaten Nias. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi lapangan, dan dokumentasi dari berbagai pihak terkait seperti guru, siswa, orang tua, dan pejabat pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa partisipasi pendidikan di Kabupaten Nias masih menghadapi tantangan yang signifikan, terutama terkait faktor ekonomi keluarga, keterbatasan infrastruktur pendidikan, dan jarak geografis antardesa. Program PIP dan BOS telah memberikan kontribusi positif dalam meringankan beban biaya pendidikan, namun belum mampu sepenuhnya mengatasi hambatan struktural dan kultural yang memengaruhi keputusan anak untuk melanjutkan sekolah. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan pendekatan kebijakan yang lebih kontekstual dan terintegrasi, termasuk peningkatan infrastruktur sekolah, transportasi siswa, dan program pemberdayaan ekonomi keluarga berbasis masyarakat.

Kata kunci: partisipasi pendidikan, Program Indonesia Pintar, BOS, faktor ekonomi, infrastruktur, Kabupaten Nias.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a major factor in developing quality human resources. A high level of educational participation reflects the success of a region in providing equitable and quality access to education for its people. However, in several regions, including Nias Regency, educational participation still faces various obstacles that need serious attention.

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Nias Regency in 2024, the education participation rate at the Elementary School (SD) level is quite high with the Pure Participation Rate (APM) reaching 99.67%, but there has been a decline in participation at higher levels of education, namely Junior High School (SMP) and Senior High School (SMA). This phenomenon shows that although access to basic education is quite good, major challenges still occur in ensuring that students continue their education to the middle and high school levels.

One of the main factors influencing the low participation in education in Nias Regency is the economic conditions of the community. The poverty rate in Nias Regency in 2023 is still quite high, which is 15.10%. This condition causes many children to be forced to work to help the family economy or do not have the funds to continue school. This is in line with research conducted by Rahmawati and Aditya (2018), which states that poverty and family economic needs are the dominant factors causing high dropout rates in remote areas. In their research, it was found that even though there are scholarship programs and educational assistance, many families still prefer their children to work rather than go to school.

In addition to economic factors, limited educational facilities are also an obstacle to increasing educational participation in Nias Regency. Based on BPS data, Nias Regency has 163 elementary schools, 52 junior high schools, and only 11 senior high schools. This disparity in the number of schools shows that access to secondary education is still a major challenge for the community, especially for those living in remote areas. Research by Fitri Mulyani, Endrizal Ridwan, and M. Nazer (2023) in the Journal of Informatics, Economics, and Business also shows that access to education is greatly influenced by the availability of infrastructure, household economy, and area of residence. The results of their study found that the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) had a significant impact on increasing educational participation, but challenges in implementation were still the main obstacle.

The Nias Regency Government has made efforts to improve access and quality of education through various programs, such as School Operational Assistance (BOS), the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP), and the construction of new schools. However, the effectiveness of these programs is still questionable, especially regarding their implementation and impact on increasing education participation rates. According to research conducted by Sari and Widiastuti (2021), although the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) has contributed to reducing the dropout rate, there are still obstacles in the distribution of assistance and transparency in its implementation. Many beneficiaries do not know for sure the procedures for disbursing funds, so that educational assistance has not been fully effective in preventing dropouts.

In addition, Hidayat et al. (2020) in their study on the effect of School Operational Assistance (BOS) on school participation rates concluded that although BOS funds help schools provide better educational facilities, economic factors and parental awareness remain the main obstacles in increasing school participation rates. The results of this study indicate that relying solely on financial assistance programs is not enough to ensure an increase in school participation rates, but there needs to be a community-based approach and education for parents about the importance of education for the future of their children. Furthermore, Susilo's (2020) study on the implementation of the 12-year compulsory education policy found that the lack of supervision of education policies and weak socialization of the program from the government meant that this program was not yet fully effective in increasing school participation rates. This is a major challenge in ensuring that the education policies that have been implemented are truly able to increase school participation optimally.

By looking at various previous studies that have been conducted, it can be concluded that economic factors, accessibility of education, and the effectiveness of government policies are still the main challenges in increasing educational participation in remote areas such as Nias Regency. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of government programs in increasing educational participation in Nias Regency, by considering economic factors, educational infrastructure, and the role of local governments in implementing educational policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education and School Participation

Education is a very important long-term investment in the development of a nation. According to Muhammad Fachry Elfarabi (2018) in his thesis on Analysis of Factors Affecting School Participation Rates in Indonesia, education has a strategic role in improving the quality of human resources. The School Participation Rate (APS) is one of the main indicators in assessing the success of the education sector in a country. In addition, in the journal of Alwan Fawwaz and Susanty (2024) regarding Community Empowerment and Participation in Education Towards Quality Schools, it is stated that education is not only the responsibility of the government, but also the responsibility of parents and the community. The success of education depends on the synergy between schools, parents, and the surrounding community.

In an effort to increase school participation rates, the government has implemented various policies, such as the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP), School Operational Assistance (BOS), and the 12-Year Compulsory Education policy. According to Arwildayanto et al. (2018) in the book Education Policy Analysis, education policies must be reviewed in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Some relevant policies are:

1. Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) – Provides cash assistance to poor students to keep them in school. However, research shows that the distribution of assistance still faces obstacles, such as lack of transparency and delays in disbursement of funds.
2. School Operational Assistance (BOS) – Helps schools with operations, but there are still disparities in the allocation of funds and their use in remote areas.
3. 12 Years of Compulsory Education – Trying to ensure that all children receive education up to high school/vocational school level, but still facing challenges in its implementation

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Educational Programs

The effectiveness of educational programs is influenced by various factors that can be grouped into internal factors and external factors. These factors determine the extent to which educational policies and programs implemented by the government can increase educational participation rates and the quality of learning in a region.

1. Internal Factors (From the Program Itself)

- a. Policy Suitability with Community Needs; According to Arwildayanto et al. (2018) in Education Policy Analysis, the effectiveness of an education program is greatly influenced by the suitability of the policy to the needs of the community. Programs that are created without considering the socio-economic conditions of the community tend to be less effective in increasing school participation. Example: The 12-Year Compulsory Education Program aims to increase access to education, but in remote areas, challenges such as long school distances and high education costs are still major obstacles.
 - b. Availability of Resources (Funds, Infrastructure, and Human Resources); According to Muhammad Fachry Elfarabi (2018) in Analysis of Factors Affecting School Participation Rates in Indonesia, the effectiveness of education programs is highly dependent on the availability of funds, infrastructure, and educators.
2. External Factors (Social and Economic Environment)
- a. Poverty Level and Community Economic Conditions; Poverty is a major obstacle to educational participation. According to Fachry Elfarabi (2018), high poverty levels are negatively related to school participation rates. Many children from poor families are forced to work to help the family economy rather than go to school.
 - b. Public Awareness of the Importance of Education; According to Mulyana Abdullah (2024) in Quality Management of Education in Schools, public awareness greatly determines the success of an education program.
 - c. Distance and Access to School (Geographic Factors); According to Fachry Elfarabi (2018), geographical factors such as long distances to schools and limited transportation are also obstacles to the effectiveness of education programs. In rural and remote areas, many students have to walk long distances to reach school. Impact: Children become less motivated to continue their education due to transportation difficulties.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze the effectiveness of government programs in increasing educational participation in Nias Regency. This approach aims to

understand in depth how educational policies are implemented in the field, as well as how social, economic, and cultural factors influence the success of educational programs. The type of research used is the phenomenological method with the aim of understanding the subjective experiences of individuals involved in educational policies, such as students, parents, teachers, and education office officials.

To obtain in-depth information, this study uses several data collection techniques, namely interviews, Field Observations, and Documentation Studies. With data analysis techniques. Data analysis is carried out using the Thematic Analysis approach, which aims to identify the main patterns and themes from interviews, observations, and documentation.

RESULT

School Participation Rate in Nias Regency

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Nias Regency 2024, the school participation rate has increased in the last five years, but there are still gaps at higher levels of education.

Based on the data above, the School Participation Rate (APS) at the elementary school level is almost 100%, but there is still a decline at the junior high and high school levels. The high school APS is lower than the junior high school, indicating that many students do not continue to high school. Assistance programs such as PIP and BOS contribute to increasing the APS, but there are still obstacles in its distribution.

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Educational Programs

1. Economic Factors as the Main Obstacle

Interviews with parents showed that many families are still experiencing economic difficulties that have a direct impact on their decision to continue their children's education to a higher level. Although the government has provided assistance through the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) to ease the burden of education costs, this assistance is still not able to fully cover students' needs. Additional costs such as transportation, uniforms, books, and stationery remain obstacles for low-income families, especially those living in remote areas with limited access to schools. A parent in South Nias expressed his concerns about the cost of his child's

education: "My child wants to go to higher school, but we don't have the additional funds for transportation and other school needs. PIP assistance does exist, but it is not enough to cover all needs." (Interview with a parent in Nias 2025)

From the results of interviews and observations in the field, it was found that parents with low incomes tend to stop their children's education after junior high school. This is because many families prioritize their children to help the family economy rather than continuing their education to high school. This phenomenon shows that even though educational assistance programs are available, there are still gaps in their implementation. PIP only provides limited educational funding assistance, so there are still other expenses that must be borne by the family. In addition, many families in Nias Regency face limited employment opportunities, which makes it difficult for them to finance their children's education in the long term.

2. School Infrastructure Limitations

In addition to economic factors, limited school infrastructure is also one of the main obstacles to the effectiveness of education programs in Nias Regency. Based on observations in several schools, it was found that educational facilities in various sub-districts are still uneven, especially in rural areas. This inequality has a direct impact on the quality of learning and the level of student participation in higher education.

One of the main problems is the small number of Senior High Schools (SMA) compared to Elementary and Middle Schools. Data shows that the availability of SMA is much less, so many students have to travel quite a distance to continue their education after completing SMP. This condition causes some students to choose not to continue their education to SMA because of the difficulty of access.

In addition, the quality of school infrastructure is also not evenly distributed. Several schools in remote areas still experience a lack of classrooms, laboratories, and libraries, which impacts the learning process and the quality of student education. Based on observation data in Nias Regency, it was found that:

Table 1. Infrastructure Availability

School Type	Availability of Adequate Classrooms (%)	Stable Electricity Access (%)	Have Library (%)
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SD	90%	95%	60%
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	85%	90%	50%
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	75%	80%	40%

Source: Processed data, 2025

From the data, it can be seen that high schools have a lower level of infrastructure accessibility compared to elementary and junior high schools. Only 40% of high schools have libraries, which means that most students at the senior high school level do not have adequate access to reading materials and additional learning resources. In addition, stable electricity access in high schools only reaches 80%, indicating that some schools still experience obstacles in providing electricity facilities that support technology-based learning processes.

The results of interviews with several school principals also confirmed that the lack of supporting facilities, such as laboratories and libraries, makes it difficult for students to develop practical skills in science and technology.

"We face obstacles in providing adequate facilities for students, especially laboratories and libraries. Without these facilities, students have difficulty in conducting experiments and independent research." (Principal of Public High School in Nias Regency, 2024)

The main findings of this study indicate that students in remote areas have difficulty accessing high schools due to the limited number of schools and the long distances involved. The quality of schools in rural areas is still lagging behind compared to schools in urban areas, both in terms of infrastructure and access to educational facilities. The lack of supporting learning facilities (such as laboratories, libraries, and stable electricity access) has an impact on the quality of education, especially at the high school level.

Effectiveness of the School Operational Assistance Program (BOS) and the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP)

The results of a survey of 50 students receiving PIP and BOS showed that:

Table 2. Survey Results

Category	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Feel PIP helps with school fees	80%
Experiencing problems in disbursing PIP	55%
Use BOS funds for school needs	75%
Schools experience delays in BOS disbursement	60%

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2025

Interviews with principals showed that while BOS and PIP help, the disbursement of funds is often late, causing schools to struggle with daily operations. "We rely on BOS funds for school operations, but the disbursement is often late. This forces us to find temporary solutions to meet the needs of the school." (Principal of a Public Junior High School in Nias District, 2024)

The findings in this study are that PIP and BOS have a positive impact, but the disbursement is often delayed. Students who receive PIP assistance still face the obstacle of additional school costs that are not covered by the assistance.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that educational assistance programs such as the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) and School Operational Assistance (BOS) have contributed to increasing school participation rates in Nias Regency. However, the effectiveness of these programs still faces various obstacles, especially in the aspects of family economy, educational infrastructure, and the distribution and management of educational assistance funds.

To better understand the findings of this study, the results are compared with previous studies to see similarities in patterns and identify factors that are still challenges in increasing educational participation in remote areas such as Nias Regency.

Economic Factors as the Main Obstacle to the Effectiveness of Education Programs

One of the main findings of this study is that the economic conditions of the community are still the main obstacle to the effectiveness of educational programs. Although PIP assistance has been provided to students from low-income families, the assistance has not been able to cover additional costs such as transportation, uniforms, and stationery, which remain a burden for parents.

This finding is in line with research conducted by Sari and Widiastuti (2021) in their journal on the Effectiveness of the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) in Increasing School Participation in Remote Areas. They found that although PIP was able to reduce the dropout rate, there were still many obstacles in the disbursement of funds and the amount of assistance was insufficient to meet students' school needs.

In addition, Fachry Elfarabi's research (2018) in Analysis of Factors Affecting School Participation Rates in Indonesia also shows that poverty levels have a negative correlation with school participation rates. Low-income communities are more likely to stop their children's education, especially after junior high school, because they have to help the family economy.

Thus, the conformity between the findings of this study and previous studies shows that economic constraints are still a dominant factor in determining the sustainability of children's education in remote areas. Therefore, educational assistance programs need to be expanded in scope, for example by:

1. Increase transportation and school supplies subsidies for poor students.
2. Increase the flexibility of PIP fund disbursement to make it more accessible to beneficiaries.
3. Providing skills training programs for students' families to increase their income.

Limited School Infrastructure as an Obstacle to Educational Participation

The results of this study also show that limited school infrastructure, especially at the high school level, is a significant challenge in increasing the rate of education participation in Nias Regency. Observation data shows that only 40% of high schools have libraries, and only 80% have stable electricity access, which has an impact on the low quality of learning in remote areas.

This finding is supported by the research of Purwanto and Setiawan (2019) in their journal discussing the Evaluation of the Implementation of the 12-Year Compulsory Education Policy in Rural Areas. They found that the low school participation rate in remote areas was influenced by the small number of secondary schools and limited educational facilities and infrastructure.

In addition, in the study of Fitri Mulyani et al. (2023) on the Relationship between Economics and Access to Education, they stated that distant school access and lack of educational facilities in rural areas make students reluctant to continue their education to high school level.

From the results of this study which are compared with previous studies, it can be concluded that:

1. The limited number of high schools causes many students to have difficulty continuing their education after junior high school.
2. The lack of supporting learning facilities (laboratories and libraries) in schools has an impact on the low quality of learning.
3. The infrastructure gap between urban and rural areas remains a major challenge in education policy in Indonesia.

To overcome this obstacle, strategic steps are needed, such as:

1. Construction of new high schools in remote areas to reduce the gap in access to education.
2. Provision of school transportation for students who live far from high school.
3. Improving school facilities through digital-based laboratory and library procurement programs.

The Effectiveness of BOS and PIP Programs in Supporting Education

Although BOS and PIP have had a positive impact in increasing access to education, this study found that there are still obstacles in the management and disbursement of aid funds. Based on interviews with school principals and education office officials, it was found that there were delays in the disbursement of BOS funds, which caused schools to experience difficulties in daily operations.

This result is in line with the research of Hidayat et al. (2020) in their journal on the Impact of School Operational Assistance on Education Participation Rates in Indonesia. They found that BOS funds greatly assist schools in providing basic facilities for students, but there are still challenges in the uneven distribution of funds and delays in disbursement.

In addition, Susilo's (2020) research in the Evaluation of the Free Education Program also shows that most schools still face challenges in the allocation of limited BOS funds, especially in meeting additional needs such as teacher training and improving the quality of school facilities. From the results of this study and previous studies, it can be concluded that:

1. The BOS and PIP programs have a positive impact on increasing school participation rates.
2. The main challenges in the effectiveness of this program are delays in disbursement and the mismatch between fund allocation and school needs.
3. Schools in remote areas are more affected by delays in BOS funds than schools in urban areas.

As a recommendation, it is required:

1. A more transparent and faster fund disbursement system, with a real-time monitoring system from the local government.
2. Increasing the flexibility of using BOS funds so that they can be adjusted to the specific needs of schools.
3. Increased supervision of the distribution of educational assistance funds to ensure they reach the right targets.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the BOS and PIP programs have a positive impact on increasing school participation rates, but still face challenges in terms of fund disbursement, economic factors, and infrastructure limitations.

To improve the effectiveness of education policies in Nias Regency, it is necessary:

1. Improvement of the education assistance fund disbursement system.
2. Construction of secondary schools in remote areas.

3. Educate parents and the community about the importance of education up to high school level.

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