

# Misuse of the Function of the Government's Cash Social Assistance Program (BST) During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this study is to find out the obstacles in the process of implementing cash social assistance in Simpang Village, Pasirkuda District, Cianjur Regency, to find out the latent and manifest functions of Cash Social Assistance (BST), to find out the forms of abuse from the recipient community of Cash Social Assistance (BST) in Simpang Village, Pasirkuda District, Cianjur Regency. This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method used by analyzing and describing events at the research location. The results of this study indicate that the distribution of Cash Social Assistance (BST) has been distributed to communities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there was misuse in the utilization of Social Cash Assistance (BST) funds by some beneficiary communities in Simpang Village. This is a latent function found in this study. In addition, the reality of the community's dependence on Cash Social Assistance (BST) in Simpang Village which can result in a feeling of laziness, consumptive community behavior and the community becoming not self-sufficient

**Keywords:** *Cash Social Assistance (BST), Function, Abuse.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Since the Covid-19 case entered Indonesia, various social and economic problems have emerged. Since the Covid-19 case entered Indonesia, various social and economic problems have emerged. The existence of the Covid 19 outbreak has paralyzed various sectors, especially those felt by the community, namely from social and economic conditions. In an education system that is implemented online, communication is limited, closing places that invite crowds such as shops, mall restaurants and so on (Aeni, 2021).

Socio-economic problems as a result of the impact of Covid 19, in Indonesia itself this is very real, one of which is in the community's economy which has resulted in increased poverty rates as happened to MSME entrepreneurs, employees who were laid off from their jobs as a way out in anticipation of closing their business premises and this affects all sectors (Estriyanto, 2020). In dealing with the declining economic impact, the government is preparing aid funds for people affected by the corona virus pandemic (Covid19), especially the lower middle class. The government has prepared several programs to help restore the community's economy by dividing them into two categories of recipients, such as regular programs and non-regular programs, both in the form of cash and community food needs (Anggraeni et al, 2021).

In Indonesia, the problem of poverty is related to the government's efforts to improve people's welfare . Poverty reduces the quality of life of the community, so there needs to be attention in overcoming it. The poverty rate which has increased during the pandemic was caused by several trade sectors experiencing a decline due to social restrictions which caused a decrease in buyers and also many employees who were laid off from their companies (Kusudur & Prabawati, 2020). In response to the existing problems, all efforts have been made by the government in preventing and suppressing the impact of Covid-19 in meeting daily needs by distributing social assistance in the form of groceries for residents' needs and also

providing stimulus for MSMEs, relief in paying electricity, taxes for entrepreneurs and society (Melati & Zulkarnain, 2021).

Social Assistance is a government program as a form of declining economic reaction in society, especially during the Covid19 pandemic where the community's economy is declining, many are unemployed due to layoffs from companies where people work. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on world life from health, economy, social life and so on (Maknolia & Hidayat, 2020). The impact that has decreased the most is the community's economy, social assistance as a way out from the government in order to help alleviate the community's basic needs. This social assistance is aimed at the lower classes of society (Melati & Zulkarnain, 2021).

The government issued a Cash Social Assistance (BST) program to reduce the burden on society due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Cash Social Assistance Program (BST) which is given to the community in the form of cash in the amount of Rp. 600,000 in 2020 and in 2021 until now, there has been a cut in the Covid-19 Social Assistance Fund (BST) to Rp. 300,000. This cut is aimed at economic recovery and also to prevent misuse of Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds and also to prevent dependence (PPN/Bappenas, 2020).

The initial goal of social assistance itself is to protect people affected by Covid-19, the implementation of cash social assistance policies is still widely viewed negatively because in its implementation there are still misdirected distribution of social assistance (Purnawan et al, 2022). Cash Social Assistance (BST) that is not on target causes affected communities who do not receive cash social assistance to experience difficulties in meeting their daily needs (Diana, 2020).

The government's cash social assistance program is considered ineffective due to abuse in the use of social assistance funds. There are at least two positive impacts. First, increasing the purchasing power of the poor (Latif & Pangestu, 2022). Someone whose income is below the average normal needs, distributes it in areas that are already relatively poor to restore very low purchasing power. Of course, in terms of providing social support to the poor, special requirements or criteria are required. However, the reality of the cash social assistance function has led to misuse and dependence by the community on cash social assistance programs (Pramanik, 2020: 113).

Its function is to help meet daily needs, but some people use the Cash Social Assistance (BST) for things that are considered less important. Some people instead misuse money from cash social assistance funds to buy their wants which are used for needs that are considered less important than their needs (Tumbel et al, 2021). In addition to the function. If it is misused, the validity of the data on the poor is questioned and will affect the accuracy of giving cash social assistance funds to people who are eligible. Often the data regarding these requirements is falsified and is no longer inferior, the recipient may be someone else (Latif & Pangestu, 2022).

Based on the background described above, the researcher is interested in conducting research, based on observations made by researchers, it is known that there are several problems that arise related to the misuse of Cash Social Assistance (BST) in Simpang Village, Pasirkuda sub-district related to beneficiary communities such assistance. The problems that occur are, there are obstacles in the distribution of Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds to beneficiary communities in Simpang Village, Pasirkuda District, Cianjur Regency that are not on target, there is a dysfunction of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program, there is an abuse of the utilization of Cash Social Assistance ( BST) in Simpang Village, Pasirkuda District, Cianjur Regency.

## **B. METHODS**

The research method used by researchers is a qualitative method. Qualitative descriptive method is research from data or objects, not material figures, but using verbal or language expressions, with accurate and systematic interpretations, and also using facts from the field. The objects in this study use natural objects and are not manipulated either in their circumstances or conditions. This method is also referred to as the naturalistic method (Arikanto, 2006). This study uses a qualitative method. Where researchers examine social phenomena that are happening in society, especially in Simpang Village. This qualitative method is used in order to be able to adjust when faced with multiple realities, qualitative methods convey the relationship between researchers and informants in a direct way. This research is aimed at obtaining facts regarding the misuse of government social assistance functions during the Covid-19 pandemic in Simpang Village, Pasirkuda District, Cianjur Regency in its distribution.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Cash Assistance Function

According to Ritzer (2012) function, namely the process of interaction with the social environment, Merton introduced the concept of manifest function and latent function. The manifest function is the intended function, while the latent function is the non-intended function. The function of Cash Social Assistance (BST) is the government's effort to help people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in the socio-economic sector, but it also contains unexpected functions where there is an abuse of the initial function of Cash Social Assistance (BST). This problem can be related to Robert K. Merton's concept of function (1996) in terms of manifest function and latent function as described below.

#### a. Manifest Function

The manifest function or real function is a function that is realized and known by the person acting, or in other words the manifest function is the function desired by the actor in an action. The manifest function can be ascertained as something desired and realized by the actor in getting these things. In this case cash social assistance is the government's effort to assist the community in meeting people's daily needs during a pandemic. The government has a function in the structure of society. In tackling the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the government is making efforts to help the community by issuing programs, one of which is a cash social assistance program for affected communities. With the policies that have been adopted by the village government in helping communities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in the community's economic sector, the government's Cash Social Assistance (BST) program hopes that people can use the cash social assistance to meet their daily needs (Sasuwuk et al, 2021).

In terms of the function of Cash Social Assistance (BST), the government has implemented this program as well as possible in terms of planning, implementing and evaluating programs that have been implemented. The function of this assistance gives a lot of hope to the government as the head of the community to be able to prosper the community in various conditions that occur, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The role of the Simpang Village government has directly assisted the community in distributing Cash Social Assistance funds. The Village Government in this case directly monitors and provides the best service for the community. The Simpang Village government also supervises the implementation of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program.

According to Merton (in Wirawan, 2013) the manifest function has a definition, that is, functions that can be anticipated that are deliberately created for a particular purpose. The link with this research is to examine the function of Social Cash Assistance (BST) which provides

benefits to beneficiary communities. The manifest function expected by the government itself in the use of Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds that has been implemented.

b. Latent Function

Based on the cases that the researchers found in the field through observations, it was found that there were several problems that occurred in the recipient communities of Cash Social Assistance (BST). The latent function of the existence of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program that occurs among the beneficiary communities which in fact has many consequences that affect people's behavior is not expected. Latent function is a function that is outside the unwanted function.

In the process of implementing the distribution of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program, people who use funds not in accordance with their initial function are due to inaccuracies in the data collection to determine Cash Social Assistance (BST) recipients, and also the lack of socialization related to the existence of the Cash Social Assistance program (BST) by the local government (Upe, 2010).

Some people who use Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds are not in accordance with their functions. Judging from the economic condition of the beneficiaries, some of them are categorized as middle-class or financially affluent people who receive Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds. Based on the findings during research observations, there were some recipients who lacked knowledge to benefit because there was no socialization regarding the use of the aid funds and what the funds were used for.

Based on the results of this study, the latent function or function that is not expected from the existence of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program by the community in its utilization is not in accordance with the function or initial purpose of this government assistance program. People who use social assistance funds are not in accordance with their functions because the recipients of Cash Social Assistance (BST) are not on target. This has resulted in many people in need not receiving this assistance.

According to Merton in Ritzer (2012) latent function which is defined as an unexpected function or an unwanted function. Latent function is defined as a function that arises unexpectedly or impulsively. In the implementation of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program, there were several consequences that were not anticipated from the implementation of the assistance program. Communities receiving Cash Social Assistance (BST) who use this assistance that is not in accordance with its initial function to meet basic needs and is used for things that are not suitable for the existence of this assistance program.

## **2. Abuse of the Cash Social Assistance Function in Sampang Village**

Cash Social Assistance has been distributed by the government since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, Cash Social Assistance (BST) has differences in its policies. Silalahi (2020) says that the recipients of Cash Social Assistance (BST) are people who do not receive Family Hope Program (PKH) assistance and are deemed eligible to receive Cash Social Assistance (BST). The recipients of Cash Social Assistance (BST) are those who have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic from an economic perspective.

Communities who receive assistance from the government are people who have been recorded and have met the requirements for recipients of Cash Social Assistance (BST). This assistance, which has been running for more than two years, has had significant changes. Many people are enthusiastic about the existence of Cash Social Assistance (BST), but on the other hand there is misuse of the use of Cash Social Assistance (BST) and people's dependence on this assistance. The results of observations and interviews conducted in Sampang Village were lacking in socialization regarding Cash Social Assistance (BST) to the community.

a. Misuse of Cash Social Assistance Programs

Cash Social Assistance (BST) which has been implemented and felt by the people who receive this assistance, the funds that have been provided are then used by the community for their needs. But on the other hand, there are deviations and abuses committed by the community itself in terms of using Social Cash Assistance (BST) funds, whose initial function is for daily needs but is used for things that are not in accordance with its initial function.

As stated by Mr. Ahmad, with the existence of Cash Social Assistance (BST), this helps the community at least, although the amount is not large, this is sufficient to meet their needs. This was also conveyed by Mr. Ajun who said that "If I am used, maybe it is only to buy what is needed, as is the case for children's snacks and if there are other needs maybe. If you say it's enough, it's not, but Alhamdulillah for business it's still going smoothly.

In this case the use of Social Cash Assistance (BST) funds according to several sources with various answers, in this case it is known that the funds from Cash Social Assistance (BST) are used for household needs and there are also those who use these funds to buy wants.

Utilization of Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds by the community to meet their needs and other matters that are in line with the purpose of providing Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds during the Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, it was also found that the use of this assistance was not in accordance with its function, because there were some people who used it to fulfill their wants and not needs, this was because some of the recipients of Cash Social Assistance (BST) were not people who had a low economy but instead people who had sufficient income. In terms of the economy, it was seen during observations by researchers of the beneficiary communities that on average the beneficiary communities have permanent buildings, run smoothly and have several businesses that are quite large.

The recipients of Cash Social Assistance (BST) do not all come from disadvantaged economic circles, but there are also some people who are categorized as people who come from affluent families. This resulted in misuse of the Social Cash Assistance (BST) function. This was revealed in the researcher's interview with Mr. Amid, one of the recipients of the assistance, who said that: "The funds that were given to me from the government for my daily needs, I bought for my household needs. But sometimes I also use it to buy fishing gear, one of which is, well, that's according to my needs, ma'am. but Alhamdulillah, I can get this help, sis."

In this study, the misuse of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) function carried out by the community in Simpang Village is related to research conducted by Morado (2021) which explains that, there are many abuses that should not exist in the use of the Cash Social Assistance Program (BST). Utilization of aid funds should be used for basic needs, but used to buy tertiary needs. This problem is due to the lack of accountability after the beneficiary gets the grant.

#### b. Dependent Behavior on Cash Social Assistance

Dependent behavior towards providing assistance which has an impact on a lack of productive souls among the community. But in fact the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program has caused new problems apart from being far from its initial function, the community is also dependent on Cash Social Assistance (BST), this was conveyed through an interview with Mrs. as long as this assistance is available, I feel helped, and I only use it for kitchen needs, but sometimes if the funds are late, I have to borrow first if the money from the government just runs out."

The phenomenon of dependency that occurs in the midst of the recipient community of Cash Social Assistance (BST) was conveyed through an interview with Mr. Irfan as the accompanying staff of Cash Social Assistance (BST). As stated regarding the use of this program, everything is running as it should. As for the utilization of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds, Mr. Irfan revealed that he did not know how the community would use the funds,

but the hope from the government was that the funds were used properly. The provision of Cash Social Assistance (BST) indirectly has an effect on changing the behavior of the recipient community, where the community feels dependent and only waits for assistance from the government without any desire to do work that can improve the economic life of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) recipient community.

Based on the findings during the study, it showed that there was an attitude of community dependence with the Cash Social Assistance (BST). The provision of Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds triggers a feeling of laziness and dependency where some of the beneficiary communities are just waiting for the assistance without wanting to do more to improve their economy.

The lack of socialization and understanding of the community regarding the function of Cash Social Assistance (BST) during the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a lack of awareness among the public regarding the use of these assistance funds. This should be the concern of the community to try to instill a more independent lifestyle and motivation to work harder to get a more decent life.

Mead (in Haryanto, 2016) divides three main concepts in his theory namely, mind, self, and society are three elements of the process of social action. An individual acts through the meaning received from others. the behavior of dependence on Cash Social Assistance (BST) during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely the product of interactions with social groups in society. This sense of dependence is created because of the use of Cash Social Assistance (BST) which is used as a symbol of hope for the continuous fulfillment of basic needs.

### **3. Sociological Analysis of Robert King Merton's Structural Functional Theory and George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism Theory**

Based on the results of the research found by researchers, researchers found that there is a function of expectations from the government and functions that are not expected by the community for the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program. This agrees with Robert K. Merton's Structural Functional theory. In the structural functional theory proposed by Merton that there are two functions, namely manifest and latent functions.

In this study it was found that the Simpang Village government had carried out its duties to distribute Cash Social Assistance (BST) in the hope that the people affected by Covid-19 could at least be helped and use this assistance with the purpose and function of the assistance. This function is in accordance with Robert K. Merton's Structural Functional theory, namely in terms of the expected manifest function. In addition, there is a latent function for some people because the use of this assistance is not appropriate or not expected, the community uses this assistance which is not in accordance with the function of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program. This was due to the inaccurate targeting of the recipients of this assistance so that many people who really needed it did not receive the assistance. In addition, the findings of this research can also be associated with the theory of symbolic interactionism from George Herbert Mead (1934). With this theory of symbolic interactionism, Mead wants to explain social actions that provide symbols or meaning from the process of interaction between individuals and groups within society.

From the results of the research above, the reality of the behavior of people's dependence on Cash Social Assistance (BST). This sense of dependence arises because humans are constantly thinking, this thinking ability is formed from social interactions that occur in their environment. Through interaction, people cannot ignore the social phenomena that occur in this stage, people can adapt to their environment. Dependence from a sociological point of view is a social act as explained by Mead in symbolic interactionism. Cash Social Assistance

(BST) provided by the government is used as a symbol that is expected so that a sense of dependence arises and this action is also based on mind, self and society.

#### D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the misuse of the government cash social assistance function during the Covid-19 pandemic in Simpang Village, Pasirkuda District, it can be concluded that the manifest function of the Cash Social Assistance (BST) program which has been implemented is quite smooth and effective. Programs from the government carried out by villages that are given to people who experience changes in their economy. Aid funds that have been channeled to the community have been used to meet their basic needs. While the latent function is the existence of utilization by the community that is not in accordance with the initial function or purpose of the existence of Cash Social Assistance (BST). The occurrence of dysfunction of Cash Social Assistance (BST) by beneficiary communities. On the other hand, there are some people who use the aid funds not in accordance with their original function, namely to use them for less important needs. On the other hand, there are some people who use Cash Social Assistance (BST) funds, namely to meet their basic needs, in accordance with the objectives and functions of the government's Cash Social Assistance (BST) program during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, there is dependence on the recipient community of Cash Social Assistance (BST) which creates a feeling of laziness and dependency. The recipient community does not try to improve the quality of their economy and only waits for assistance from the government which causes the community to become less independent and think too much. consumptive.

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