THE 2025 SOCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LEGAL CERTAINTY FOR THE COMMUNITY

Suwandi Hartono[1] , Dede Hendratno Djuanda[2]
[1] *Indonesian Language Education Study Program, Postgraduate, University Swadaya Gunung Jati, Indonesia*
[2] *Indonesian Language Education Study Program, Postgraduate, University Swadaya Gunung Jati, Indonesia*

Corresponding Author: Suwandi Hartono[1], **E-mail**: angton333@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT

Social assistance (bansos) policies are essential instruments of the state in realizing public welfare, particularly for vulnerable groups requiring social protection. However, the implementation of social assistance in 2025 reveals challenges related to legal certainty for beneficiary communities. This study aims to analyze the 2025 social assistance policy and its implications for legal certainty by examining the alignment between existing regulations and actual implementation in the field. The research employs a qualitative approach through normative-empirical analysis of relevant legislation, official reports, and documented data on the execution of social assistance programs in 2025. The results show that although the regulatory framework has been established through various legal instruments, issues such as inaccurate beneficiary data, administrative constraints, diverse distribution mechanisms, and weak supervision persist. These conditions lead to legal uncertainty and potentially hinder the fulfillment of citizens' social rights. The discussion highlights that the gap between normative provisions and practical implementation is the main factor obstructing the realization of welfare state principles. The study concludes that strengthening regulations, harmonizing implementation processes, and improving accountability are crucial to ensure sustained legal certainty and social justice within social assistance policies.

| KEYWORDS
Social Assistance, Legal Certainty, Public Policy, Welfare State, Social Protection.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Indonesia routinely distributes various forms of social assistance (bansos) to vulnerable communities as part of efforts to ensure social security and reduce poverty [13]. Programs such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT), and Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) play an important role in ensuring that low-income families receive support according to their basic needs [14]. In 2025, the government updated the schedule and mechanisms for distributing various types of social assistance at the end of the fiscal period, reaching tens of millions of beneficiary families (KPM) [18]. However, field realities indicate that the complexity of determining beneficiaries, the variety of types of assistance, and differences in disbursement mechanisms create doubts and uncertainty among recipient communities. Data and reports show that although the policy has been established, the actual distribution often differs in terms of timing, accuracy in targeting, and implementation transparency [4].

The legal aspect of social assistance policy becomes highly relevant because bansos are part of the state's commitment to protecting citizens' rights, especially for vulnerable groups [12]. The distribution of assistance

based on specific data and administrative mechanisms requires clear regulations and procedures to ensure accurate targeting [2]. Without strong regulations and mechanisms, social assistance policies are vulnerable to misuse, mistargeting, abuse of authority, or inequality in access to aid [9]. In the 2025 situation, when multiple forms of social assistance are distributed simultaneously, the principles of justice, transparency, and legal certainty for recipients are crucial to ensure their rights are protected. Therefore, social assistance policies cannot only be viewed from economic or social perspectives, but must also be analyzed from legal and governance perspectives.

Challenges in the implementation of social assistance emerge from administrative and institutional factors [15]. For instance, the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS), which has not been consistently updated, can lead to overlapping data, inaccurate targeting, and unequal assistance distribution [11]. Moreover, the implementation of social assistance varies in quality across regions [17]. Regions with strong infrastructure and monitoring tend to achieve more accurate targeting, while remote or less monitored areas are more vulnerable to negligence or misuse. This inconsistency illustrates the clear difference between policy as it is written (das sollen) and policy in practice (das sein), which can weaken public trust in social assistance policies [16].

Previous studies have explored the implementation and effectiveness of social assistance programs in Indonesia. For example, analyzed the influence of demographic dynamics on requests for social assistance and found that changes in population characteristics affect the accuracy of beneficiary determinationn [1]. Concluded that education, poverty, and unemployment rates are significant factors determining the success of social assistance in reducing poverty [2]. In addition, demonstrated that the use of classification technology such as the C4.5 algorithm can improve the accuracy of identifying beneficiaries, although its application requires further validation and infrastructure readiness [3]. These studies highlight that data accuracy, targeting precision, and implementation effectiveness remain key challenges in social assistance programs.

Although there are studies that examine effectiveness, economic aspects, and technological support in the distribution of social assistance, very few have focused on evaluating legal certainty and the protection of rights for social assistance beneficiaries, particularly in the context of the 2025 social assistance policies, which have new mechanisms and regulatory adjustments. Therefore, this research aims to fill that gap by analyzing how the 2025 social assistance policy provides or has not yet provided legal certainty for beneficiary communities. The findings are expected to contribute to strengthening regulations and governance of social assistance so that implementation can run more fairly, transparently, and in line with the mandate of the welfare state.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach using a normative-empirical legal research method. The normative approach is used to analyze the legal basis, regulations, and policies governing social assistance in 2025, especially those related to legal certainty, protection of citizens' rights, and governance of social assistance distribution. The analysis is carried out by examining relevant legal instruments, such as Law Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare, Government Regulations related to social assistance, and technical regulations issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs and regional governments. This normative review aims to assess the extent to which policies provide legal certainty that is clear, firm, and enforceable. The empirical approach is used to describe the reality of program implementation in the field, allowing comparison with existing normative provisions. Empirical data were obtained through document studies of government reports, official media news, and academic publications discussing the 2025 social assistance implementation. Additionally, the research examines findings in the public administration sector that reflect challenges in distribution, beneficiary data accuracy, and risks of irregularities. This empirical analysis provides insight into the gap between policy and practice in ensuring legal certainty for social assistance beneficiaries.

The data analysis technique used is descriptive qualitative analysis by processing legal materials and empirical evidence, then interpreting them systematically. The analysis was conducted by categorizing data based on key issues, such as legal certainty, targeting accuracy, procedural transparency, and protection of beneficiary rights. The results were then used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the 2025 social assistance policy and formulate recommendations for improving regulations and distribution mechanisms to enhance accountability and ensure social justice.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Analysis of Legal Certainty in the 2025 Social Assistance Policy

Legal certainty is one of the fundamental principles in the implementation of public policy, including in the distribution of social assistance (bansos), which functions as a constitutional mandate realized through social welfare regulations in Law Number 11 of 2009. In the 2025 social assistance policy, legal certainty is reflected in the regulatory framework governing rights, beneficiary eligibility criteria, data verification mechanisms, and disbursement procedures [9]. However, although there is a strong legal foundation, data and field facts indicate the presence of gaps between legal provisions and actual implementation. This is evidenced by the fact that some beneficiaries still do not meet the criteria and delays in disbursement become sources of uncertainty for the community [6]. The inconsistency between norms and practices shows that legal certainty has not been fully guaranteed in the distribution of 2025 social assistance.

In the context of administrative law, legal certainty requires regulations that are clear and capable of being implemented without multiple interpretations at the level of execution [5]. The continuous changes in technical provisions and data management for social assistance often trigger confusion among implementers as well as beneficiaries [7]. This condition leads to potential administrative disputes, especially when the rights of citizens to receive assistance are not fulfilled, indicating that legal protection has not yet functioned optimally [9]. Therefore, the effectiveness of the social assistance policy is strongly influenced by the consistency of regulation implementation.

These findings are in line with previous research which indicates that the effectiveness of social assistance programs depends on the readiness of the system in ensuring accurate targeting and efficient distribution mechanisms [6]. Further revealed that the effectiveness of social assistance contributes to improving public welfare, although its success must be supported by strong governance to prevent misuse [5]. Also emphasized that digital innovation in the distribution system does not fully eliminate legal challenges since technical barriers and limited digital literacy among beneficiaries still exist [8]. This direction reinforces the importance of strengthening the legal aspects of policy implementation to ensure effectiveness.

Based on these findings, it is important to review the key components of the 2025 social assistance policy, particularly those related to operational standards and the legal framework governing implementation. Legal certainty must be upheld through more detailed regulations, strong supervisory mechanisms, and transparency in every stage of distribution [7]. Harmonization between central policies and local implementation is also crucial to prevent differences in interpretation that may disadvantage beneficiaries [9]. With strengthened legal certainty, the 2025 social assistance policy is expected not only to fulfill the mandate of the welfare state but also to ensure the concrete and sustainable protection of social rights for the public.

B. Implementation of Social Assistance Policy: Administrative Challenges and Public Rights

The implementation of the 2025 social assistance policy does not only depend on regulations but also on administrative readiness at both the central and regional levels [13]. Major challenges arise from the beneficiary data management process that still relies on a database which is not fully accurate or up to date [14]. Delays in updating the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) create discrepancies between eligible beneficiaries and real conditions in the field [11]. This situation leads to mistargeting and public complaints because individuals who meet the requirements are not always registered as beneficiaries. These administrative issues directly impact the fulfillment of beneficiaries' rights.

In addition to data problems, verification and distribution processes often face technical constraints and complex bureaucratic procedures [12]. Various disbursement mechanisms, including electronic transfers, post office channels, and physical distribution, create inconsistencies in implementation [13]. Limited digital literacy among some recipients further restricts access to assistance distributed through electronic systems [14]. In the perspective of public administrative law, unequal implementation may lead to inequality among beneficiaries, conflicting with the principle of equality before the law. As a result, social rights are not fully guaranteed because rights are only truly realized when assistance can be accessed without unnecessary obstacles.

This analysis is supported by research indicating that successful distribution of social assistance is strongly influenced by administrative preparedness and infrastructure support [12]. Furthermore, stated that the proactive role of local government institutions is essential to ensure orderly distribution and compliance with legal provisions [15]. Meanwhile, emphasized that the use of more accurate methods and technology in beneficiary selection can improve targeting accuracy, although system integration remains necessary for optimal implementation [11]. These findings reaffirm that governance reinforcement is closely linked to legal certainty in social assistance implementation.

Administrative challenges are also closely related to aspects of supervision and legal accountability [13]. Limited supervision in regional areas opens opportunities for irregularities, including abuse of authority and illegal deductions by specific actors (Sylvia et al., 2025). Such misconduct undermines accountability principles and violates beneficiaries' rights protected by policy [11]. Therefore, strengthening legal-based control mechanisms is necessary to ensure that every stage of implementation complies with regulations, while public education is also needed so that communities understand their rights and can report violations. By minimizing administrative barriers, the rights of beneficiaries can be more reliably guaranteed.

C. Alignment of the 2025 Social Assistance Policy with the Welfare State Principle

The 2025 social assistance policy is a concrete manifestation of the state's function in ensuring public welfare, as mandated by Article 34 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which is operationally reinforced through the implementation of social assistance programs based on economic empowerment [2]. The welfare state principle emphasizes that the state is obligated to provide continuous social protection for vulnerable groups, including through accurate and well-targeted social assistance distribution [18]. However, in its implementation, the fulfillment of citizens' rights through social assistance requires consistency between legal regulations and governance practices [17]. When policies fail to fully guarantee these rights, the welfare state principle is not entirely achieved. Therefore, the evaluation of social assistance policy alignment with the welfare state concept must consider the aspects of legality, targeting accuracy, and the sustainability of benefits for beneficiaries.

Normatively, the government has established various legal instruments to ensure the implementation of the 2025 social assistance policy, ranging from laws to technical operational regulations [2. However, issues such as inaccurate data, shifts in distribution mechanisms, and irregular disbursement schedules still hinder the fulfillment of social rights [1]. The disparity between written policy and actual implementation demonstrates that social protection has not fully reached the groups that should be prioritized [18]. Through the welfare state approach, the state is not only responsible for regulating but must also ensure that social protection can genuinely be accessed by all eligible citizens without administrative obstacles. When this fails, the ultimate goal of social welfare is not optimally achieved.

Other studies reinforce these findings by revealing that proper utilization of social assistance requires strengthened legal governance and public administration [17]. Emphasize that although social assistance like PKH can improve welfare, it may potentially lead to dependence that hampers empowerment if regulations are not directed toward enhancing the capacity of beneficiary families [16]. Meanwhile, highlights that the use of technology in beneficiary classification can improve targeting accuracy, although its effectiveness still depends on system readiness and administrative certainty [3]. These findings indicate that the realization of a welfare state must be supported by adaptive regulations and consistent implementation.

Thus, the alignment of the 2025 social assistance policy with the welfare state principle greatly depends on the state's ability to reduce implementation barriers and provide adequate legal guarantees [16]. Strengthening data management systems, improving beneficiary literacy, and optimizing supervision are important strategies for enhancing social assistance governance [1]. Furthermore, ongoing regulatory evaluation is necessary to ensure responsiveness to evolving social and economic conditions [2]. If welfare principles are consistently upheld, social assistance will not only serve as an economic instrument but also as a legal guarantee that upholds the dignity and fundamental rights of beneficiary communities.

IV. CONCLUSION

The 2025 social assistance policy is part of the state's commitment to promoting social welfare by fulfilling the social rights of vulnerable groups. However, this study indicates a significant gap between regulatory frameworks and implementation, resulting in legal uncertainty for beneficiaries. Problems related to data accuracy, access limitations, varied disbursement mechanisms, and weak supervision are major factors influencing the legal protection of social assistance rights. Therefore, strengthening legal certainty must be carried out through consistent implementation, improved accountability, and harmonization between policy and practice so that welfare state goals can be achieved optimally.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of reforming regulations and governance in the distribution of social assistance in Indonesia to ensure stronger legal certainty for beneficiaries. This study also contributes to the academic discourse on the relationship between social policy and administrative law, particularly in the context of dynamic social assistance implementation. By fostering institutional synergy and enhancing public transparency, the government can minimize irregularities and ensure the continuous fulfillment of citizens' social rights.

The government needs to strengthen integrated technology-based data management systems, enhance beneficiary literacy, and expand service access to support equitable and accountable social assistance delivery. Legal-based supervision should be reinforced through effective reporting mechanisms and community empowerment to encourage public participation in monitoring distribution practices. Additionally, regular evaluations of the regulations governing social assistance are needed to maintain responsiveness to social and economic changes. With these efforts, the 2025 social assistance policy and future implementations can better ensure legal certainty, social justice, and sustainable protection for vulnerable groups.

REFERENCES

[1] Alfassa, A. I., Yanti, G. N., Tizar, R. Z., Kamila, N. C., & Kurniawan, M. R. N. (2025). Analisis dinamika kependudukan terhadap permohonan bantuan sosial penduduk kurang mampu Pekan Arba tahun 2024. *Jurnal Perangkat Lunak, 7*(2), 186–197.

[2] Aliyah, T., & Bahtiar, M. Y. (2025). Pengaruh bantuan sosial, tingkat pendidikan dan tingkat pengangguran terbuka (TPT) terhadap kemiskinan di Indonesia tahun 2018–2022 dalam perspektif ekonomi Islam. *Jurnal Akuntansi, Manajemen dan Ilmu Ekonomi (JASMIEN), 5*(2), 491–508.

[3] Bramanda, J. (2025). Klasifikasi masyarakat penerima bantuan sosial dari pemerintah dengan metode algoritma C4.5. *Jurnal Komputer Antartika, 3*(1), 34–41.

[4] Detik.com. (2025, December 3). Daftar bansos Desember 2025 yang cair, cek penerima dan jadwalnya. *detikSumbagsel*.

[5] Dwilaksmi, A., Nabilah, A. A., & Sihaloho, E. D. (2025). Dampak realisasi belanja bantuan sosial pangan terhadap indeks pembangunan manusia di Indonesia. *Jurnal Riset Ilmu Ekonomi, 5*(1), 36–50.

[6] Halawa, W. (2025). Analisis efektivitas bantuan sosial dalam menurunkan tingkat kemiskinan. *Circle Archive, 1*(7).

[7] Nabila, S. F., Tambak, T. A. T., & Siahaan, A. T. A. A. (2025). Perancangan sistem informasi pengelolaan bantuan sosial berbasis web pada Dinas Sosial Provinsi Sumatera Utara. *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, 2*(6).

[8] Nugroho, M., & Wulandari, S. (2025). Aplikasi pengolahan bantuan sosial berbasis web dan mobile di Kapanewon Kokap Kulon Progo. *Jurnal Indonesia: Manajemen Informatika dan Komunikasi, 6*(1), 688–705.

[9] Rahma, A., Lestari, D. A., Nasiroh, R. A., & Afif, A. (2025). Menggali akar permasalahan: Kajian mendalam terhadap data kemiskinan dan mekanisme bantuan sosial. *Menulis: Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara, 1*(3), 192–198.

[10] Republik Indonesia. (2009). *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 11 Tahun 2009 tentang Kesejahteraan Sosial*. LN 2009 No. 12, Tambahan LN No. 4967.

[11] Rizkiyanto, M. A., Sabirin, S., & Triyono, G. (2025). Rekomendasi penerima bantuan sosial dalam upaya pengentasan kemiskinan di Kabupaten Bogor menggunakan metode TOPSIS. *Creative Research Journal, 11*(1), 39–50.

[12] Syahwanes, A. C., Saepudin, E. A., Madina, L. U., Azzahra, S., & Muslimah, I. (2025). Evaluasi dampak PKH terhadap pengurangan kemiskinan dan peningkatan akses layanan sosial bagi keluarga miskin: Analisis mencakup efektivitas pemberian bantuan sosial terhadap peningkatan kesejahteraan masyarakat. *Ekopedia: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi, 1*(2), 176–183.

[13] Syamsu, J. (2025). Analisis kebijakan bantuan sosial terhadap peningkatan kesejahteraan masyarakat di era digital Kabupaten Sijunjung. *RIGGS: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business, 4*(3), 7688–7696.

[14] Syata, W. M. (2025). Efektivitas program bantuan sosial dalam mengurangi kemiskinan. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Inquiry in Science, Technology and Educational Research, 2*(1), 554–559.

[15] Sylvia, B., Maharani, M. V., Sinaga, N. M., Darsono, W., & Oktavianti, R. (2025). Peran Dinas Sosial Kota Batam dalam penyaluran bantuan sosial untuk mendukung ketertiban sosial di masyarakat. *Jurnal Syntax Imperatif: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Pendidikan, 6*(3), 826–834.

[16] Taufik, T., Khairunnisa, K., & Amirulkamar, S. (2025). Bantuan sosial menjadi ketergantungan: Evaluasi dampak Program Keluarga Harapan di Kabupaten Pidie Jaya. *PANDITA: Interdisciplinary Journal of Public Affairs, 8*(2), 686–700.

[17] Utami, N. D., & Wibowo, R. Y. C. (2025). Determinan yang memengaruhi perubahan anggaran bantuan sosial. *E-Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Udayana*, 1128–1139.

[18] Yahya, M., & Pailis, E. A. (2025). Pengaruh distribusi zakat konsumtif, zakat produktif dan bantuan sosial pangan terhadap kemiskinan pada seluruh kabupaten di Provinsi Riau. *Jurnal Tabarru':IslamicBankingandFinance,8*(1),301–313.