

# Protecting Vulnerable Workers: Social Safety Net Policy In The Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis

Neneng Sri Rahayu, Alih Aji Nugroho, Rima Ranintya Yusuf

*Politeknik STIA LAN Jakarta*  
*@stialan.ac.id*

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze how vulnerable workers facing economic challenges during Covid-19 pandemic. This study is also intended to know whether SSN's is able to protects vulnerable workers during Covid-19 pandemic. This research use case study approach. Data collection was carried out with literature study, secondary data, and interviewing vulnerable workers, Biro Perencanaan Kementerian Sosial RI, and also Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional PPN/BAPPENAS. Data collection was conducted on May untill August 2020. The results of this research shows that SSNs is not able to protects vulnerable worker during Covid-19 pandemic. The presence of SSNs during Covid-19 pandemic presenting new problems in the implementation among others are the inequality in aids distribution, uncertainty of the procedures and requirement to gets the aid, data of the recipient is not up to date, etc. The government needs to review the SSNs policy during Covid-19 pandemic and improve poverty data, so poverty data are integrated.

**Keywords:** Social Safety Networks; Covid-19 pandemic; vulnerable workers

## Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis bagaimana kondisi kelompok rentan dalam menghadapi penurunan ekonomi akibat pandemi Covid-19, dan apakah kebijakan SSNs pada masa pandemik tersebut mampu melindungi pekerja rentan? Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan studi pustaka, data sekunder, dan wawancara terhadap pekerja rentan, Biro Perencanaan Kementerian Sosial RI, dari Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional PPN/BAPPENAS. Pengumpulan data dilakukan pada bulan Mei-Agustus 2020. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kebijakan jaring pengaman sosial pada masa pandemi masih belum mampu menjadi penyelamat ekonomi masyarakat. Hadirnya berbagai program jaring pengaman covid-19 tersebut ternyata menghadirkan berbagai permasalahan baru dalam tataran implementasinya khususnya di level "grassroot". Beberapa masalah yang muncul yaitu tidak meratanya penyaluran bantuan yang didistribusikan, ketidakpastian prosedur dan persyaratan untuk menerima bantuan, data sasaran penerima yang tidak up to date, kondisi darurat warga yang memang membutuhkan tetapi tidak terdaftar, dan permasalahan pekerja sektor informal yang bestatus KTP pendatang. Pemerintah perlu mengkaji ulang kebijakan JPS di masa pandemi dan memperbaiki data kemiskinan agar terpadu.

**Kata Kunci:** Jaring Pengaman Sosial, Pandemi Covid-19, Pekerja Rentan

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic was officially announced in Indonesia starting on March 2, 2020, with two positive cases. The government

responded by implementing a lockdown. Vulnerable workers are a group affected by the crisis. The lockdown was one of the most severe moves in history, leaving most workers

unprotected and causing unparalleled suffering (Parwez, 2022). The social safety nets provided by the government are considered the savior's hope.

As the world's fourth most populous country, Indonesia feels a significant impact, especially for vulnerable workers. Until March 25, 2022, the number of positive cases of the coronavirus (Covid-19) in Indonesia reached 5,986,830 cases, and 154,343 died (Mathieu, E., Ritchie, H., Ortiz-Ospina, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia led to a socioeconomic crisis felt by almost all levels of society. Vulnerable workers are the group most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic due to the cessation of the company's operations where they work (Holding et al., 2021).

According to Akhlak (2021), poverty in Indonesia has increased to 1.63 million due to the pandemic. The ILO identified the crisis, which was the impact of Covid-19, as the most severe crisis since World War II because the number of job losses is increasing rapidly and is predicted to continue to grow. The World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2022 (WESO Trends) results show that the unemployment rate is estimated to reach 207 million people. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), obligatory or recommended workplace closures affected 94 per cent of the worldwide workforce as of September 2020, with millions of workers facing layoffs and reduced working hours. Overall, the ILO predicts that 8.8 and 35 million more people will be out of work by the end of 2020.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the Ministry of Manpower (Kemenaker) noted that 72,983 employees had been victims of the termination of work (PHK) due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Putra, 2021). Four sectors worst affected by Covid-19 are retail and wholesale trade, manufacturing, real estate, transportation and restaurants. In the textile industry, 2.16 million workers or 80 per cent of workers, have been laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Tirto. id,

April 27 2020). The workers who were laid off adding the number of vulnerable workers in Indonesia.

In April 2020, the Indonesian government prepared a scheme to protect vulnerable workers from crisis. Assistance schemes provided in the form of cash assistance through an increase in the family of hope program from the number of PKH recipient families of 9.2 million to 10 million with an increase in the number of benefits by 25 cents. An increase in the number of basic food card recipients from 12.5 million to 20 million, with the previous value of Rp 150 thousand to Rp 200 thousand; increase the Pre-Employment Card budget from Rp 10 trillion to Rp 20 trillion with the number of beneficiaries increased to 5.6 million people; free electricity tariffs for 24 million 450 VA customers and a 50% discount on tariffs for 7 million 900 VA customers in April, May, June 2020 (Katadata, March 31, 2020). The social safety net in the form of social security and health is expected to minimize the negative impacts experienced during a crisis, guaranteeing that at least they can live decently and rise again after the crisis has passed.

This study analyzed how social safety nets can save vulnerable workers during a pandemic. Amid a lack of income and the demand for living must continue while necessities soar, the Social Safety Net policy is one hope to save them from a critical condition. Second, mapping the social safety nets implemented so far and the obstacles and challenges in their implementation. Third, formulate recommendations for the appropriate Social Safety Net policy to save vulnerable workers. Amid the crisis and the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is getting worse, and it is uncertain when it will end, agile policy intervention is needed to minimize the occurrence of a prolonged crisis.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Vulnerable workers in crisis vortex

Conceptually, vulnerable workers have various definitions and classifications. Guy Standing (2011) modern economist describes the condition of vulnerable workers comprehensively. Through his book "The Precariat: the New Dangerous Class" he refers to vulnerable workers as precariat. Standing explains that vulnerable workers are those who work erratically based on contracts, working hours, uncertain guarantees, and uncertain scopes. Some scholars define vulnerable workers as informal sector workers whose conditions are far from standard values and have a high risk. However, according to Standing (2011), vulnerable workers do not only include informal sector workers, but more broadly include all workers who are in economic uncertainty. The insecurity received is almost the same as for informal workers, even in some cases, formal sector workers also experience the same insecurity as vulnerable workers. Only the degree of insecurity between vulnerable workers and formal workers is different. As Stunting (2011) explains,

"The emergence of the Precariat Class is a new problem in the workforce in this globalization era, they work like permanent workers but do not have the right to security, working hours and life expectancy. They are trapped in a web of poverty and they represent a class that demands social welfare".

Hewison (2016: 428), argues that the concept of vulnerable workers has several terminology such as contract workers, flexible workers, non-standard jobs, temporary or seasonal workers, domestic workers, and piece workers. If formal workers still have clear legal protections, namely formal work contracts, a maximum working limit of 8 hours a day, overtime arrangements, leave rights, and all the protections stated in the law, workers are vulnerable to waiting in line or being thrown out of formal workers.

When referring to the ILO grouping, there are at least two types of vulnerable workers, namely the first self-employed who are workers with their own means of production and do not work for others. In this category, two groups are affected, namely those who are assisted by other people in carrying out their work and independent workers who are assisted by other workers who are not paid. The second is unpaid family workers. In the Indonesian context, the government has included one more category of vulnerable work, namely casual workers. Each group of vulnerable workers has a different character of vulnerability. Different vulnerabilities mean different policy strategies needed to intervene in these vulnerabilities. Vulnerable workers as independent workers, for example, depend on the small businesses they develop for their lives. In certain situations, such as when a crisis occurs, they tend to place their business capital as a support for basic needs, so that their business capital is vulnerable to running out. The impact of the fragility of the self-employed business also has an effect on unpaid families. They have been working without a formal fixed income, but on a voluntary basis from the business unit holder, so that when the family business experiences a decline, they will be affected. Meanwhile, the form of vulnerability experienced by freelancers is the uncertainty of their daily income. When economic activity declines, their daily income is threatened, which means their lives are also threatened.

The uncertainty of life of vulnerable informal workers is in fact interdependent with the formal economy. When the formal economic structure declines, the impact will be felt in the informal sector. An illustration of this condition can be seen from the case in DKI Jakarta which relies on the service sector in the economy and the center of government as a support for the economy. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought the central government service sector to a standstill. This condition of course causes economic activity to decline drastically so that

informal workers who depend on this sector become increasingly difficult and depressed.

## B. Informal Sector Workers as Vulnerable Workers

The general description of the informal sector is identical with disorganized, and small-scale businesses. According to Tjandraningsih (2014), the characteristics of the Indonesian economy divide jobs into two, namely the formal sector and the informal sector. The informal sector has characteristics called “non-standardized” work as described as part-time, temporary, seasonal, casual, own-account, self-employment, and multiple job-holding employment; unregulated, unprotected, insecure, low-wage, and low-productivity (Arnold & Bongiovi, 2013 ; Vosko, Zukewich, & Crawford, 2003).

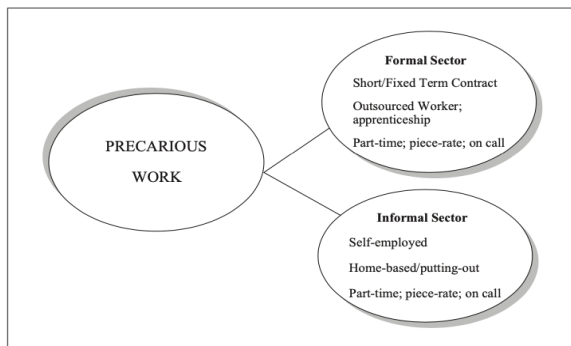


Figure 1. Vulnerable employment in the formal and informal sectors in Indonesia. (Tjandraningsih, 2014).

Workers who work in the informal sector are informal workers. While the criteria for entering informal businesses according to The 15th ICLS (ILO 2000) are (1) private non-corporate businesses, namely companies owned by individuals or households that are not legal entities that are separate independently from their owners, and there is no complete account. Which allows the financial separation of the company's production activities from the other activities of its owners. (2) home-based businesses, namely goods or services produced on a small scale at home that employs neighbors with low wages. (3) Small businesses around the formal sector.

Referring to the above criteria, the ILO defines informal workers as:

1. Self-employed and employers working in their own informal sector enterprises
2. Employees holding informal jobs, whether employed by formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, or as domestic workers paid by the household
3. Self-employed workers engaged in the production of goods exclusively for their own use such as subsistence agriculture.

According to the classification of data from the Central Bureau of Statistics based on employment status, informal workers are:

1. Self-employed is working or trying to bear economic risks, namely by not returning the production costs that have been incurred in the framework of the business, and not using paid workers or workers unpaid, including those whose nature of work requires special technology or expertise.
2. Trying to be assisted by non-permanent workers/unpaid workers is working or trying at your own risk, and using unpaid workers/workers and/or non-permanent workers.
3. Casual worker in agriculture is a person who works for another person/employer/institution that is not permanent (more than 1 employer in the last month) in an agricultural business in the form of a household business or a non-household business on the basis of remuneration by receiving wages or rewards in the form of money or goods, and either with daily or wholesale payment systems. Agricultural businesses include: food crop farming, plantations, forestry, animal husbandry, fisheries and hunting, as well as agricultural services.
4. Non-agricultural worker is someone who works for another person/employer/institution that is not permanent (more than 1 employer in the last month), in a non-agricultural business by receiving wages or rewards in the form of money or goods and either with a daily payment system and wholesale. Non-

agricultural businesses include: businesses in the mining, industry, electricity, gas and water sectors, construction/building sector, trade sector, transportation sector, warehousing and communication, financial sector, insurance, building rental business, land and company services, community service sector, social and individual.

5. Family/unpaid worker is someone who works to help other people who are trying without getting wages/salaries, either in the form of money or goods.

BPS in calculating the number of informal workers, combines the types of work above with the labor force or unemployment. So the data on the number of informal workers obtained is still biased. From the various criteria for informal workers above, this study will define informal workers as follows:

1. Independent workers who do not have workers, namely workers or businesses that are carried out alone without employing other people. The results of the efforts made are only sufficient for self and family subsistence. This type of work is for example street vendors, pulse sellers, hawkers, traveling traders, coffee shops, food stalls, etc.
2. Casual worker in urban areas, someone who works for another person/employer/institution that is not permanent (more than 1 employer in the last month). Workers who fall into this category, for example, daily workers in the main market, carrying workers, daily construction workers, odd jobs.
3. Business assisted by non-permanent workers/unpaid workers is working or trying at their own risk, and using unpaid workers/workers and/or non-permanent workers. Family stalls that have workers but are family members, home laundry entrepreneurs, shopkeepers.
4. Workers holding informal jobs, whether employed by formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, or as domestic workers are paid by households. For

example, domestic workers (PRT), MSME workers, home industry workers, online transportation workers, workers in other online services, etc.

### C. Social Safety Net Concept

Social Safety Nets (SSNs) are an alternative policy in overcoming the economic crisis that has increased the number of unemployed and poor people. This program is carried out because it is expected to help the family's economic strength even though it is temporary. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) (Kompasiana.com) explains that social protection is basically a set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability through efforts to increase and improve the capacity of the population to protect themselves from disasters and loss of income; does not mean that social protection is an integral part of development activities in the social sector.

This is in line with the results of 2018 State of Social Safety Nets (Kompas, 2018) that the social safety net program has a major impact in global efforts to fight poverty, approximately 36% of beneficiaries of this program managed to escape extreme poverty, also reduce inequality, and reduce the poverty gap by about 45%, but not move out of poverty.

The SSN policy was initiated in the United States in the 1930s due to a blizzard that resulted in soaring prices for basic commodities which resulted in a drastic decline in the quality of life, as Sumodiningrat (1999) argued that the social assistance package for crisis-prone communities within the framework of a social safety net was adopted for the first time by President Roosevelt in the 1930s in the United States. The economic depression that hit the United States accompanied by severe snowstorms resulted in the paralysis of most of the country's real economic activities. Unemployment rates rose sharply, as well as an economic contraction accompanied by soaring prices for basic necessities. The decline in the productivity of various economic sectors has resulted in a decline in people's purchasing

power which has resulted in the inability of the community to meet basic needs. As a result, the quality of life for the majority of the population has drastically decreased.

In addition, capitalist economists also introduced the concept of a social safety net during the transition of economic conditions as explained by Mubyarto (Sumodiningrat, 1999) that the concept of a social safety net was introduced by capitalist economists during the process of economic transition in Eastern European countries in the 1990s. At that time, there was an economic transition from a socialist economic system to a market economy system. This process of economic transition has resulted in groups of poor people who during the socialist economic system received free food rations from the government to no longer get free food rations.

The implementation of the SNN policy in Indonesia began in 1993 which was known by two definitions of JPS, "classic" according to its original meaning, namely providing food assistance and creating labor-intensive jobs. JPS "enhanced or JPS Plus", namely the provision of continuous assistance to productive socio-economic activities "JPS Plus" has been adopted by Indonesia in the poverty reduction program/movement in the national movement for the 1993 IDT program.

In line with the development and influence of the strategic environment, the SSN/JPS policy in Indonesia is known as social protection as stated in Law Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare. The implementation of social welfare is a directed, integrated, and sustainable effort carried out by the central government, regional government, and the community in the form of social services to meet the basic needs of every citizen, which includes social rehabilitation, social security, social empowerment, and social protection. This policy is an effort directed at preventing and dealing with risks from social shocks and vulnerabilities.

In Indonesia, according to Sumodiningrat (1999) JPS programs are prioritized on:

1. Increasing food security which is directed at ensuring the availability of sufficient and affordable food materials for the community;
2. The creation of productive employment (labor intensive) which is directed to provide opportunities in economic activities through a productive labor-intensive pattern;
3. Social protection directed at maintaining public access to basic services, especially education and health;
4. Development of small and medium enterprises (small medium enterprises) for economic empowerment of productive people who have a cooperative spirit through capital assistance, training, counseling, guidance and promotion assistance and business partnerships.

Covid-19 pandemic and large-scale social restriction policy have caused economic slowdown that influence the production ability of many companies around the country. So that it has an impact on many employees who are laid off, this condition results in income inequality and an increase in the poor. The informal sector is no exception, many people depend on this sector and are affected as well. This condition must be a concern and government intervention so that the impact can be minimized and there is stability and economic growth. Macro policies carried out by the government in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic are inflation stability, creating inclusive economic growth, creating productive jobs, maintaining the investment climate and trade regulations, increasing agricultural sector productivity, and developing infrastructure in rural areas. The micro policies include improving social assistance policies aimed at reducing the burden of spending and increasing the incomes of the poor and vulnerable groups through productive economic programs.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach used is descriptive qualitative. Sources of data are primary data

and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in depth interviews with key informants and participant observation. Key informants were selected based on their involvement in the implementation of social safety net policies and vulnerable workers affected by the crisis. Determination of informants using purposive sampling technique. Interviews were conducted with informants consisting of:

1. Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia
2. Planners from the Ministry of National Development Planning PPN/BAPPENAS
3. Representatives of vulnerable workers (Jakarta online motorcycle taxi community) who received JPS assistance

Apart from interviews, primary data was also obtained through observation on the condition of the community and the environment of vulnerable workers. Secondary data was obtained through literature study of related primary data, results of previous research, and regulatory documents related to social safety net policies and their implementation. Data collection techniques in this study were carried out using in-depth interviews, observation and documentation methods.

The research process begins with a desk review based on data elaboration, theory, previous research and literature review. From the desk review, the research instrument was compiled which was then tested through pilot testing. The results of the pilot testing instrument were then revised again to serve as the final instrument in data collection. After the data is collected, it is then analyzed through the stages of data aggregation, organization and classification of data according to research question units. The stages of data aggregation are special in the form of data abstraction so that a general pattern is obtained. The data is then organized chronologically, categorically and classified

into typologies. Furthermore, it is analyzed to compile an explanation of the phenomenon of the object being studied. Primary and secondary data analysis was carried out based on the results of recording and recording interviews as well as all data derived from previous studies. In addition, there are also regulatory documents relating to the Social Safety Net Policy in the Covid-19 pandemic crisis.

This research was conducted in the area of the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government because it was a red zone area for the Covid-19 pandemic and carried out Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). So that, the area is a profitable laboratory to see how the crisis impacts on vulnerable workers, the implementation of social safety net policies, and their impact on vulnerable workers. Meanwhile, data collection was carried out from May to August 2020. Interviews were conducted by video conference and by telephone considering the dynamic field conditions. Interviews with the Head of the Planning Bureau of the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs were conducted using Zoom Meetings.

Data processing and analysis techniques used in this study are following these steps: Data Collection ; primary and secondary data collection was carried out for three months. Primary data in the form of in-depth interviews will be transcribed in detail. Secondary data were classified according to the analysis design in the literature review. Data Reduction ; the data that has been collected and classified according to the analysis tool in the literature review is then reduced according to the degree of relevance of the data. Data Displays; the data that has been reduced and has a high relevance is then displayed. Verification and Confirmation of Conclusions; verification of the displayed data is done by comparing it with other literature and confirming it again with other respondents who are close to the issue.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The President's directives in the Limited Meeting (Ratas) on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 regarding the effectiveness of the distribution of the Social Safety Net Program are: (1) the implementation is really on target, data is also from the beneficiary group by name, by address; (2) The distribution as soon as possible, as quickly as possible, precisely, and quickly; (3) the mechanism for distributing the social safety net is carried out as efficiently as possible, using practical, uncomplicated, and difficult methods for the community.

Practically, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, the government has allocated a budget of Rp. 203.9 trillion for social protection in the

context of handling Covid-19. The budget is allocated for: 1) Family Hope Program Rp 37.4 T; 2) Basic food Rp 43.6 T; 3) Social assistance for Jabodetabek Rp 6.8 T; 4) Non-Jabodetabek Social Assistance Rp. 32.4 T; 5) Pre-employment Rp 20 T; 6) Electricity discount of Rp. 6.9 T; 7) Logistics/Food/Shopping Rp 25 T; 8) Direct Village Fund Cash Assistance Rp 31.8 T.

#### 1. Family Hope

The Hopeful Family Program is targeted to reach 10 million Beneficiary Groups (KPM) with the distribution of social assistance which was originally carried out once every 3 months to every month with double benefits in April, May and June.

**Table of Recipients of Family Hope Program**

Group	Year	Months
Pregnant Women	Rp 3 million	Rp 250 thousand
Early Childhood	Rp 3 million	Rp 250 thousand
School Children		
· Elementary	IDR 900 thousand	Rp 75 thousand
· Junior	IDR 1.5 million	Rp 125 thousand
· High School	IDR 2 million	Rp 166 thousand
Persons with Disabilities	Rp 2.4 million	Rp 200 thousand
Elderly	Rp 2.4 million	Rp 200 thousand

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, 2020

In one family, the assistance is given to a maximum of 4 people. The highest assistance provided was Rp. 10,800,000/year or Rp. 900,000/month, while the lowest assistance was Rp. 900,000/year or Rp. 75,000/month.

#### 2. Basic Food/Non-Cash Food Assistance Program (BPNT)

The target of this program is 20 million Beneficiary Groups from the previous 15.2 million with Beneficiary Groups (KPM) with an expansion of 4.8 million KPM. The index was also increased from the previous Rp 150,000 to Rp 200,000 per month in April-December 2020 and March-December 2020 for existing, with the following illustration:





Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, 2020

### 3. Jabodetabek Basic Food Social Assistance

This program aims to meet the needs during the emergency period and to anticipate that the Jabodetabek community not homecoming. The target locus of assistance is DKI Jakarta as many as 1.3 million families, and Bodetabek 600 thousand families with an assistance value of IDR 600,000 per family per month (April-June 2020) and IDR 300,000 per family per month (July-December 2020). The form of assistance provided was in the form of basic food packages (rice, cooking oil, sardines, corned beef, tea bags, sweet soy sauce, bottled chili sauce, instant noodles, bath soap, and UHT milk) and 25 kg of rice. The assistance was sent by PT. Pos from the warehouse providing goods (Provision and Packaging of Sembako) to the local RT/RW, to be handed over to the beneficiary.

### 4. Cash Social Assistance

This assistance is given to 9 million heads of families outside Jabodetabek with a focus on people who have not received PKH or BPNT with an assistance value of IDR 600,000 per family per month (April-June 2020) and IDR 300,000 per family per month. Distribution media through PT. Pos and through Bank accounts by Himbara.

Reflecting on the crisis era leading up to the reform era on 1998, at least it was the beginning of the government issuing a social safety net

program for the first time in Indonesia. According to the SMERU research institute, the social safety net program implemented by the government targets various fields including food security, education, health, employment, and community empowerment. At the end of the Social Safety Net program in that era, the target of the program was that beneficiary households had experienced a 4-10% increase in per capita consumption.

In the case of the COVID-19 safety net program, the government has at least seven programs that seem to be a "trump card" for the government to get out of the abyss of slowing economic growth during the pandemic. The seven programs are the Family Hope Program (PKH), Cash Intensive Work (PKT), Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), Basic Food Cards, Pre-Employment Cards, electricity subsidies for certain groups, and special social assistance for the Greater Jakarta area. The presence of these various programs turned out to form new problems at the level of implementation, especially at the grass root level.

Data problems are one of the things that become the "faucet" that opens the problem of implementing a social safety net program that is not supported by a transparent and accountable bureaucracy. The phenomenon of an angry President then emerged and became public consumption, including various statements by

policy makers that were deemed inappropriate in unraveling the “tangled threads” of implementing the social safety net program. This phenomenon seems to be a justification that the policies made do not solve the problem but are increasingly causing new problems and are far from the policy principles that according to Hecló, H. (1989) are presented in order to solve the problem. Several times the Ombudsman has also criticized the implementation of this social safety net program as an attitude towards increasing complaints related to the central government's promise to people affected by Covid-19.

Standing (2011) in "The Precariat: the New Dangerous Class" explains that vulnerable workers are those who work erratically based on contracts, working hours, uncertain guarantees, and uncertain scopes. Formal workers are in a vulnerable condition when their work contracts are uncertain, wages are below the average standard of living, and do not have health insurance or social security. Vulnerable workers are the group most at risk of receiving the impact of the crisis because their average income is only in the range of USD 100-200 per month and do not have social protection to health protection. When economic conditions decline, their lives are also threatened. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its report "A Crisis Like No Other, An Uncertain Recovery" predicts that Indonesia's economic growth will decline to its lowest point after the 1998 economic crisis, which is minus 0.2%. The economic impact that was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in the end also affected workers, especially workers in the tourism, trade, manufacturing, and agriculture sectors.

Data from the Ministry of Manpower (Kemenaker) in the second week of April 2020 showed that 2.8 million workers were laid off as a result of Covid-19. That number is growing. As of July 31, 2020, data from the Ministry of Manpower (Kemenaker) shows that as many as 3.5 million workers have been laid off as a

result of Covid-19. Many companies are laying off and also laid off their workers without giving their rights in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

One of the vulnerable groups of workers affected by the Covid-19 pandemic are online motorcycle taxi drivers. Most drivers online make work online as their only main source of income to support their families. So far, they rely on daily income from working online. During the pandemic, not many consumers used their services in line with the restrictions on community mobility launched by the government in order to control the spread of Covid-19. However, most of them still try their luck by working outside the home while hoping for orders to come in because that is the only way to get money to provide goods for their families. Even though they had forced themselves to continue working outside the home, the number of orders they received was only one or two. There are even days when they don't get orders at all, either to deliver people, deliver goods or shop.

Most of the respondents that were interviewed online are motorcycle taxi drivers. Most of them are immigrants who are trying to make a fortune in the city. Some of them are urban poor who have low economic capacity, and have very limited access to various public facilities and services (Coburn, 2004).

One of the online motorcycle taxi drivers interviewed, Joko, is an online taxi driver who lives on a Petamburan area. Petamburan is one of the red zones of the Covid-19 pandemic. Joko, who is from Kebumen, lives in a small rented plot, where 2 families in one plot are occupied. On the map, not all of the plots have public bathrooms/WC, so they have to take turns when they want to take a shower or defecate. Joko is a reflection of the efforts of vulnerable workers to survive during the pandemic.

### **Vulnerable Worker Survival Strategy in a Pandemic Period**

Geras (1983: 72) states that there are essential needs that must be met so that humans can survive at least consist of eating, drinking, working, resting, and health. The Covid-19 pandemic condition forces online motorcycle taxi drivers to continue to work outside the home to meet the needs of their families to make a living. For those who rely on daily income, not working means not eating. All respondents stated that their daily income from online motorcycle taxi drivers dropped significantly. Achmad Mukorrobin (interview, 2020) an online transportation driver said:

"Before (pandemic) a day you can get 70 to 120 and a half days, for example like this out at 7/8 until noon ends. Now (after the pandemic) from this morning, this is just the first easy gosend, thank God. Yes, on average, if you go out at 7/8 to 6 o'clock, you can enter 2 orders, one between 13,000 has not been discounted, this is gosend 24, right."

The decline and even the loss of income sources forced online motorcycle taxi drivers to have strategies to stay alive. Especially with a prolonged pandemic and it is not certain when it will end. Some of them decide to return to their hometowns, or send their family members back to their hometowns because they are no longer able to survive in the city.

Several respondents to online motorcycle taxi drivers stated that they had to increase their working hours two to three times during the pandemic. Extending working hours is not always followed by an increase in the amount of income, or simply getting income with the same value as their income before the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

With these limitations and a significant decrease in the amount of income, they have to

adjust to lowering the quality and quantity of consumption in order to survive. Nurhadi, an online transportation driver (interview, 2020) added,

"In the past, you could still buy cigarettes, now it's wasteful, peanuts are hard. Now bring lunch since leaving the house for lunch. Aqua carries 2 large bottles on the seat. It's called this condition, we have to be smart."

At least there are some notes on the problems that occurred during the distribution of social safety net program assistance targeting Jabodetabek residents, including those related to the uneven distribution of aid distributed, uncertainty of procedures and requirements for receiving assistance, data on target recipients that are not up to date, emergency conditions for residents who indeed in need but are not registered, and the problem of informal sector workers with migrant identity cards status. Among these problems in general are more related to updating beneficiary data and appropriate distribution schemes. In connection with the problems of migrants, especially informal workers with migrant status, it is necessary to then receive separate treatment from the government.

In this case, informal workers with migrant status will be difficult to be covered in the social safety net assistance program scheme which is included in the special social assistance category for the Jabodetabek area. Meanwhile, in order to get the assistance, informal workers are faced with having to re-process some documents which are bureaucratic and take a long time. Meanwhile, if you want to take care of social assistance originating from the region, it is necessary to mobilize back to the area where he is registered, while social restriction policies are still being implemented in Jakarta (such as closing access to public transportation, public transportation administration procedures that require additional costs such as rapid charges, etc). This condition is a separate

problem that really needs to get a discretion for the government so that the social safety net program can be felt for informal sector workers.

In addition to the social assistance program that specializes in the Jabodetabek area, other programs included in the series of Social Safety Net Programs have also drawn similar polemics. Reflecting on the pre-employment card polemic, for the Jakarta area, it actually doesn't have much of a significant effect or impact on informal sector workers. This is because in the Jakarta area to be able to participate in training as the facilities provided in the pre-employment card program activities are relatively the same and easily accessible through other media that are free of charge. This means that the pre-employment card is not appropriate to be applied in the DKI Jakarta area, which in general has access to free facilities (such as a wifi corner , etc.) to surf the virtual world in order to access content that is business ideas as well as business opportunities or work skills that are soft skills.

The community in general, especially for informal workers, expects assistance that is direct without intermediaries (vendors), especially in the pre-employment card program there is a selective system, meaning that the community in general cannot be covered (obtain) and creates double assistance with other social safety net programs. With a total budget of approximately Rp 20 trillion, the pre-employment card program is very ineffective and inefficient for the beneficiaries as part of the funds disbursed will be used to purchase training packages and the incentive scheme provided in the system. This incentive scheme is also causing problems because the nominal assistance cannot be received directly but is still in the form of digital money (entered in the e-wallet or digital wallet).

In a difficult situation such as the current situation, informal sector workers are no longer faced with how to get a new job but more towards "eating or not eating today". So that the

transfer of pre-employment programs or assistance schemes is more desirable for the informal worker sector affected by the pandemic. Moreover, if the paid package fees and incentives provided for the pre-employment card program can be distributed by cash transfer to direct beneficiaries, it can also be a solution to cover people who are not registered (switches) in other social safety net programs. So it's no wonder then that the problem is increasingly widespread in the community and public complaints about cases of pre-employment programs also blow up to the Ombudsman and KPK authorities. The resignation of Jokowi's special presidential staff, Adamas Belva Syah Devara, CEO of Ruang Guru Startup, who became a partner in the implementation of the pre-employment program, also did not reduce the polemic of the social safety net program. Again, the beneficiaries (informal workers) are victims of a series of problems from the social safety net program.

## CONCLUSION

Reform of the social protection system is the key to accelerating poverty reduction, which is expected to increase by the end of 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, it is necessary to accelerate the improvement of the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) towards social registration in stages to cover 100 percent of the population supported through national DTKS updating, development and digitization of village monographs, as well as capacity building of local governments to support regular self-update of DTKS through outreach on-demand. This day is to support data accuracy on the integration of various social assistance as a reliable and comprehensive social safety net system. The social safety net policy that is not based on solid integrated data causes the policy to be not well targeted.

The social safety net program which is predicted to be the main solution to protect people affected by COVID-19 seems fragile in

its planning and implementation. The polemic of the social assistance program, especially in the Jabodetabek area and the pre-employment card program as the above phenomenon, are some of the small problems that appear behind the big problems of the social safety net program as a whole.

In the case of the COVID-19 safety net program, the government has at least seven programs that seem to be a "trump card" for the government to get out of the abyss of slowing economic growth during the pandemic. The seven programs are the Family Hope Program (PKH), Cash Intensive Work (PKT), Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), Basic Food Cards, Pre-Employment Cards, electricity subsidies for certain groups, and special social assistance for the Greater Jakarta area. The presence of these various programs turned out to present new problems at the level of implementation, especially at the grass root level.

At least there are some notes on the problems that occurred during the distribution of social safety net program assistance targeting Jabodetabek residents, including those related to the uneven distribution of aid distributed, uncertainty of procedures and requirements for receiving assistance, data on target recipients that are not up to date, emergency conditions for residents who indeed need but are not registered, and the problem of informal sector workers with migrant identity cards status. Among these problems in general are more related to updating beneficiary data and appropriate distribution schemes. In connection with the problems of migrants, especially informal workers with migrant status, it is necessary to then receive treatment separately

In this case, informal workers with migrant status will be difficult to be covered in the social safety net assistance program scheme which is included in the special social assistance category for the Jabodetabek area. With a total budget of approximately Rp 20 trillion, the pre-employment card program is very ineffective

and inefficient for the beneficiaries as part of the funds disbursed will be used to purchase training packages and the incentive scheme provided in the system. This incentive scheme is also causing problems because the nominal assistance cannot be received directly but is still in the form of digital money (entered in an e-wallet digital wallet).

From the results of the research conducted, there are several suggestions that the central government and local governments, especially DKI Jakarta, should make to further optimize social safety net policies during the pandemic.

1. Social safety net policies are more focused on basic needs. Secondary programs such as training through pre-employment cards are ineffective and not well targeted.
2. It is necessary to accelerate the improvement of the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) towards national social registration.
3. Cash social assistance is more effective in providing cash because the data shows that most people who are vulnerable to digital literacy are still low.
4. Capacity building and communication between stakeholders at the local level such as sub-districts/villages/sub-districts in the execution of social safety net programs

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We express our gratitude and highest appreciation to the Management of the STIA LAN Jakarta Polytechnic, the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of National Development Planning PPN/BAPPENAS, representatives from the Ojek Online community, and fellow academics and all parties who cannot be mentioned one by one in the preparation of this article.

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