

## Efforts to Overcome Poverty Through Integrated Education and Business Skills As a Form of National Defense

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### ABSTRACT

Poverty in Indonesia, affecting almost a quarter of the total population, or approximately 23.85 million people, is a structural issue that has a reciprocal relationship with low educational quality, creating a vicious cycle that impedes national progress. This condition is exacerbated by educational disparities, as reflected in Indonesia's low global ranking, and the state's failure to realize the mandate of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD NRI 1945) to enlighten the nation through the effective allocation of 20% of the State Budget (APBN). The failure of the poor to acquire sufficient skills and critical thinking through education directly impacts national Human Resources (HR) quality and traps the country in the middle-income trap (mid-life crisis). This study aims to analyze the factors contributing to high poverty and low education, and to formulate policies that can integrate education and business skills as a fundamental effort in national defense (Bela Negara). This research employs the Normative Legal Research method using the statutory approach and the Conceptual Approach. The findings indicate that structural poverty and the state's failure to holistically implement the welfare state concept, including the inefficiency in allocating the 20% education budget, are the main factors perpetuating poverty. The proposed solution is an integrated policy that not only relies on social assistance and scholarships (KIP, KJMU) but also demands macro-economic reforms focused on inclusive growth and the development of education relevant to business skills as a permanent solution.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The poverty rate in Indonesia reaches almost a quarter of the total population in Indonesia, which certainly shows that around 23.85 million people out of 283.5 million inhabitants in Indonesia are poor. According to Soerjono Soekanto, a legal sociologist, poverty is a condition in which a person is unable to support themselves in accordance with the standard of living of their group and is also unable to utilize

their mental and physical abilities within that group (Libra & Fauzan, 2023). Meanwhile, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) measures poverty using the Basic Needs Approach (Basic Need Approach). Poverty is viewed as the economic inability to meet basic food and non-food needs as measured by the poverty line (food and non-food). Thus, the poor are those whose average per capita monthly expenditure is below the Poverty Line (GK).

As we know, poverty is a major problem in this country. Poverty itself can stem from various factors, including the quality of education, which greatly influences this issue. Poor quality education can affect a family's poverty level due to limited economic conditions and skills, which ultimately affects the quality of human resources, which in turn influences mindsets and habits. The issue of poverty in Indonesia has been a major focus in the national development process (Putra et al., 2023). Poverty is not only an economic problem, but also affects various aspects of life, including education. Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution emphasizes that poverty is a serious problem related to many factors such as education, income, unemployment, geography, character, and culture (Ginting, 2022). Poverty is not only limited to rural areas, but also occurs in urban areas. This problem has existed since before the era of reform in Indonesia and is a complex challenge faced by all governments in the world, including Indonesia.

Currently, education has entered the 21st century, where technology, industry, and other developments are advancing rapidly. However, as technology continues to advance rapidly, the state of education in Indonesia is concerning, with Indonesia ranking 54th out of 78 countries included in the World Population Review (Zaini, 2018). This is due to the many serious educational problems in Indonesia, which have long been a concern. Education in Indonesia is still uneven, and there is still discrimination against educational equality in Indonesia. For example, education is still very focused on the island of Java, while other parts of Indonesia, especially in Eastern Indonesia, are neglected. Discrimination against educational equality is caused by various factors, including economic factors, which greatly affect the quality of education.

Poverty and education are like two sides of a coin; they are inextricably linked, reciprocal, and mutually reinforcing (vicious cycle). A person's economic status can affect the quality of their education because, in reality, a high level of education also requires money and material resources. Conversely, the quality of education that a person receives will certainly have a significant impact on their quality of life (Kevin Priyatna, 2022). In other words, if someone has a high level of education, it will certainly influence their economic status, because through education, every human being has the necessary skills to live a more decent life. Through education, every human being can acquire the important skills to live a more prudent and purposeful life. Education not only provides academic knowledge, but also shapes character, trains critical thinking skills, and instills moral and social values (Indasyah & others, 2023). With education, a person can understand the world around them, make the right decisions, and face life's challenges with confidence (Hanadi, 2019). Moreover, education opens up opportunities to achieve goals and contribute positively to society. Therefore, education is the main foundation in shaping an individual's future, which will certainly have a significant impact on the quality of a country's human resources, which in turn can ultimately shape the quality of a country to be more integrated. This is added to the theory that education has an impact on poverty reduction.

The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia itself, in Paragraph 4, has provided a visionary mandate regarding the objectives of the state, which states that: "Furthermore, to establish an Indonesian State Government that protects the entire Indonesian nation and all of Indonesia's bloodshed, and to promote general welfare, educate the nation, and participate in implementing world order based on independence, eternal peace, and social justice, Indonesian National Independence was formulated in a Constitution -Constitution of the Indonesian State, which is formed in a Republic of Indonesia based on the sovereignty of the people with the following principles: Belief in One God, just and civilized humanity, Indonesian unity, and democracy guided by the wisdom of deliberation/representation, as well as the realization of social justice for all Indonesian people."

The phrase states that one of the objectives of establishing this state is to promote general welfare and educate the nation. These two things are certainly very closely related and interconnected. To fulfill

the objectives of the state, Article 31 Paragraph 4 of the 1945 Constitution stipulates that the state is obliged to prioritize the education budget to at least 20 percent of the total state and regional budgets. However, in reality, the law that was created does not reflect the actual situation. Based on data reported by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), around 21.61 percent of children in Indonesia do not attend school, both in urban and rural areas. The gap between economic and educational factors is a serious problem that has yet to be solved for the welfare of all Indonesian people.

In this research, it is crucial to discuss the efforts that can be made to alleviate poverty through integrated education as a means of national defense for the people of the Republic of Indonesia. Through this paper, the author aims to discuss in more detail the underlying factors of this nation's problems related to poverty and education, and then propose solutions to effectively untangle them, aiming to advance public welfare and enhance the nation's intellectual life, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Based on the background presented in this research, the research questions are: 1) what factors contribute to the high poverty rate and low education level in Indonesia; and 2) what policies can be developed to alleviate poverty through education.

## 2. METHODS

The type of research used in this study is Normative Legal Research, which is conducted by examining several related legal materials to gain a deeper understanding of legal phenomena (Marzuki, 2017). Related to the objectives and uses of this research, it is to enrich and develop the legal system by identifying weaknesses, gaps, or needs related to the Indonesian State's efforts in hacking poverty through education and providing effective policy recommendations related to these problems. The approach in this research uses the Statutory Approach or better known as the statute approach and the Conceptual Approach related to educational activities to hack poverty. Which is through several primary legal materials related regulations such as the 1945 Constitution, Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System along with Government Regulations related to its Implementation, namely Government Regulation Number 48 of 2008 concerning Education Funding which was later amended by PP No. 18 of 2022, Law No. 13 of 2011 concerning Handling the Poor including Presidential Instruction Number 8 of 2025 concerning the Acceleration of Extreme Poverty Alleviation which coordinates programs such as People's Schools and the Smart Indonesia Card (KIP) to open access to education for underprivileged families. A number of other secondary legal materials were also needed for this research, sourced from library materials and several related journals.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Factors in the High Poverty Rate and Low Education in Indonesia

The high poverty rate in Indonesia is the result of a combination of structural poverty and unequal access to economic resources, creating a vicious cycle that is difficult for the lower classes to break. This poverty is exacerbated by the inability of the majority of the productive-age population to compete in the modern job market due to a lack of skills and quality formal education (Nur Wardhani, 2018). The low quality of education, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas, directly results in disempowered human resources (HR), trapping them in low-wage informal jobs. Furthermore, geographical factors and poor infrastructure in various regions hinder economic mobility and wealth distribution, further widening the gap between growth centers and peripheral areas. High consumption patterns and the inability to manage family finances are also often micro-factors that compound the powerlessness caused by an unfair system.

Furthermore, the low quality of education in Indonesia is not only caused by a lack of physical facilities, but also by the quality of teaching and the relevance of the curriculum, which does not fully meet the needs of industry and the future job market (Marasaoly et al., 2025). An education system that emphasizes memorization over critical reasoning fails to produce innovative graduates prepared to

face increasingly complex global challenges. Indirect costs of education—such as transportation, uniforms, and books—remain a heavy burden for poor families, forcing parents to choose not to send their children to school or even to withdraw them from work. Furthermore, low respect for the teaching profession in the regions, particularly for contract teachers, directly impacts the quality of the teaching and learning process. Thus, the problems of poverty and education are closely intertwined, where failure in one aspect automatically hinders improvement in others, creating stagnation in human development.

The continuing scourge of poverty has placed Indonesia in a situation often referred to as the "mid-life crisis" or middle-income trap, where economic growth slows without a corresponding increase in the welfare of the people (Bagus, 2023). The country has failed to make the fundamental leap from a natural resource-based economy to one based on innovation and quality human resources, a prerequisite for escaping this trap. Persistent poverty rates, particularly multidimensional poverty encompassing vulnerabilities in access to health and education, demonstrate that high GDP growth does not automatically trickle down to the lower levels of society. This widening gap poses a serious threat to social cohesion, political stability, and ultimately, to the sustainability of development itself.

Meanwhile, to address this scourge of poverty, Indonesia must immediately undertake a profound revision of its national economic development strategy, shifting from simply pursuing macroeconomic growth to inclusive and sustainable growth (Santoso & others, 2013). This requires strengthening labor-intensive industrial sectors capable of absorbing workers at living wages and increasing investment in social infrastructure, such as sanitation, clean water, and affordable energy for the poor. Failure to effectively address poverty will perpetuate child exploitation and other social problems, demonstrating that the country has not fully integrated its economic and social capital. Therefore, this mid-life crisis is a call for the government to more seriously implement its role as a welfare state, ensuring that every citizen has a fair opportunity to prosper.

Although education has always been declared a top priority and protected by the constitution, its implementation often deviates from its essential goal of enlightening the nation and shaping the whole Indonesian person. The constitutional mandate requiring a minimum budget allocation for education is contained in Article 31 paragraph (4) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that "The state shall prioritize the education budget at a minimum of twenty percent of the state budget and regional budgets to meet the needs of national education provision." This 20% budget allocation from the national/regional budgets is intended to ensure equitable access and high quality education, but its effectiveness is often questioned because significant funds are still absorbed by non-essential sectors (Libra & Fauzan, 2023). Ironically, the mandated free education still leaves many hidden costs that force poor children to drop out of school.

In fact, the essence of education is not merely the transfer of knowledge, but also character building, increasing competitiveness, and creating social equality in a diverse society (Fajar, 2023). The misuse of the 20% of the national budget, for example, often focuses more on physical development than on improving teacher competency and curriculum quality in the regions. This leads to extreme disparities in education quality between urban and rural schools, which directly contributes to the human resource gap and poverty (Junaidi, 2018). Therefore, the government must conduct a thorough audit of the allocation of this 20% of funds, ensuring that funds are prioritized for programs that directly improve education quality and reduce the financial burden on poor families. By refocusing on the essence of education, the government can use this instrument as the most powerful weapon to break the chain of structural poverty.

Poverty in Indonesia must be recognized as a structural problem rooted in injustices in the economic, political, and social systems, and therefore demands a planned and in-depth focus from the government on addressing it (Barthes, n.d.). Structural poverty occurs when prevailing social and economic systems systematically prevent certain groups from gaining equal access to resources, opportunities, and power. This includes resource monopolization, discrimination in the labor market, and development policies that favor only a small elite. The government, as the highest authority and

constitutionally mandated, is obligated to undertake radical interventions to dismantle these unjust structures and replace them with inclusive ones (República del Perú, 2011). The government's failure to recognize and address poverty as a structural problem will only result in patchwork solutions that never address the root cause.

Therefore, the government's focus in addressing structural poverty must be directed toward policies that redistribute assets and capital, increase access to micro-enterprise credit, and invest heavily in education and health in impoverished areas (Alba, 2018). This demands political courage from the government to review its macroeconomic policies, which have tended towards a liberal and market-oriented approach, towards a just, people-centered economic model. Furthermore, structural responses include strengthening sustainable and targeted social safety nets, not just temporary cash assistance (Sekretariat SDGs DKI Jakarta, 2023). The government must create a framework that enables the poor to build their own economic independence, transforming them from objects of aid to active subjects of development (Direktorat Jenderal Kekayaan Intelektual, 2019). Only with a structural approach can the state ensure that national prosperity is not enjoyed by only a select few.

The existence of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Kemensos) is a direct embodiment of the mandate of Article 34 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which explicitly states that "The poor and neglected children shall be cared for by the state," placing the Ministry of Social Affairs as the primary initiator in efforts to care for and empower these vulnerable groups. The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for designing and implementing various social security programs, such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) and food assistance programs, which aim to maintain purchasing power and meet the basic needs of the poor (Junaidy, 2014). The Ministry's initiating role is crucial because it maintains centralized data on levels of social vulnerability, enabling the government to implement measurable and data-driven interventions. However, the biggest challenge is ensuring the effectiveness and accountability of aid distribution at the grassroots level, avoiding leakage and mistargeting.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Affairs' role goes beyond providing charitable aid; it must transform into a holistic social and economic empowerment institution, in line with the concept of a welfare state (Zon et al., 2017). This empowerment should include skills training relevant to the local labor market, providing access to capital for micro- and small-scale enterprises, and ongoing social assistance for the poor. The Ministry of Social Affairs must collaborate with other ministries, such as the Ministry of Manpower and Cooperatives, to create an ecosystem that supports the economic independence of beneficiaries, rather than simply relying on aid (Alqorni et al., 2025). Changing the mindset of the public and civil servants from a paternalistic mentality to a facilitator is imperative, so that the constitutional mandate to care for the poor truly translates into empowering them and elevating their dignity.

The role of local governments (Pemda) in supporting the implementation of care for the poor is crucial and irreplaceable, as Pemda is the closest executive branch with the most understanding of the social conditions and specific needs of the communities in their regions. In accordance with the principle of regional autonomy (Tedjo, 2018), Pemda has the authority and responsibility to allocate Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budgets (APBD) to complement and strengthen social assistance programs from the central government. Pemda functions as the technical implementer in the field, verifying poverty data, distributing aid, and providing direct assistance and monitoring to beneficiary families. The success of poverty empowerment programs depends heavily on the commitment of regional heads and the efficiency of local bureaucracies in ensuring the accuracy of targeting and timely distribution of aid.

However, in many cases, the effectiveness of local governments is often hampered by regional fiscal constraints, a lack of local policy innovation, and a lack of solid coordination between the Social Services Agency (Dinsos) and other relevant regional agencies, such as the Education and Health Services (Jumaida & others, 2018). Local governments should not only function as aid distributors but also as initiators of empowerment programs based on local potential, such as skills training tailored to

the region's leading commodities. Furthermore, local governments are required to strengthen oversight and complaint mechanisms to ensure there is no misuse of social assistance funds at the village or sub-district level. By optimizing the role of regional executives in designing adaptive programs and increasing accountability, local governments can become a key driving force in poverty alleviation efforts and fulfilling the basic rights of the poor and neglected children.

The government's mistake in paying attention to macroeconomics lies in its tendency to prioritize high aggregate growth (such as GDP) without paying sufficient attention to the fair distribution of the results of that growth across all levels of society, which results in inequality in welfare (Portal Informasi Indonesia, 2022). Macroeconomic policies that are overly oriented toward foreign investment and capital-intensive sectors often fail to create adequate employment for the poor, many of whom have little education. The President, as head of government, as stipulated in Article 4 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, plays a key role in maximizing executive implementation to achieve the nation's goals, namely protecting the entire nation and advancing the general welfare, which are primary responsibilities. However, the lack of political courage to reform more progressive fiscal policies and monetary policies that support the real sector has resulted in poverty remaining a persistent problem.

Therefore, to correct this error, the President must maximize his role by directing the entire cabinet to focus on economic inclusiveness and creating quality jobs for the people, rather than solely focusing on growth targets (Rizqi et al., 2024). This requires strong inter-ministerial coordination to ensure that industrial, trade, and education policies are aligned to support the poor in becoming more productive. The use of executive power must be directed toward reducing bureaucracy and facilitating access to capital for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the backbone of the people's economy. By placing people's welfare as the primary indicator of macroeconomic success, rather than simply growth, the government can use policy instruments to effectively guarantee the basic rights of the poor and strengthen the foundation of national development.

The high poverty rate in Indonesia, beyond the failure of the macroeconomic system, is heavily influenced by the low quality of human resources due to unequal access to education and healthcare, which creates an inability to improve individual competitiveness (Zaini, 2018). High rates of structural unemployment and underemployment indicate a mismatch between the outcomes of the education system and the demands of the labor market, trapping millions of people in informal employment with inadequate wages. Furthermore, corruption and rent-seeking practices at various levels of government and the private sector significantly divert development resources that should be allocated to poverty alleviation programs (Arifin, 2020). Climate change and natural disasters also contribute to new poverty, particularly for farmers and fishermen, who lack adequate safety nets to restore their economic assets.

In addition, uncontrolled population density, especially in urban areas, and family dysfunction due to a lack of financial literacy and good parenting practices, contribute significantly to high poverty rates. Limited access to reproductive health services and family planning (FP) programs in poor areas often results in large family burdens, exceeding parents' economic capacity to meet basic needs (Zaini, 2018). Furthermore, feudalistic cultures and social discrimination against certain groups (e.g., ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples) also act as structural barriers that limit their access to resources, land, and economic opportunities. Therefore, poverty alleviation must employ a multidimensional approach, recognizing that this problem cannot be solved solely through economic policies, but also through improvements to social, cultural, and environmental systems.

### **Policies That Can Be Present in Efforts to Eradicate Poverty through Education**

The state holds the original authority and full constitutional responsibility to implement empowerment and control poverty rates, a fundamental mandate enshrined in Article 34 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which mandates the care of the poor and neglected children (Gandara, 2020). This authority is realized through the formulation of strategic, planned, and

sustainable national policies to create a just and inclusive economic system for all levels of society. Legal instruments, such as laws, government regulations, and presidential decrees, serve as the formal basis for the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in various sectors, including education, health, and employment (Agustina, 2016). Poverty control requires structural intervention by the state, not simply providing assistance, but fundamental improvements in access to resources and economic opportunities. The state must ensure that natural wealth and national resources are truly used for the greatest prosperity of the people, as mandated by Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Failure to control poverty is not only an economic problem, but also a moral crisis and a violation of human rights (Musak, 2019). Therefore, the entire state apparatus, from the central to the regional levels, must work with a single vision to fully realize the principles of a welfare state. Effective empowerment requires synergy between ministries and institutions to avoid overlapping programs and wasteful public funds. Strong executive leadership is a prerequisite for mobilizing the entire bureaucratic machinery in measurable and accountable poverty alleviation efforts (Maziyah & Nugraha, 2020). Budget allocations, especially those sourced from the State Budget (APBN), must be prioritized for pro-poor programs that directly impact the income and quality of life of the poor. Legislative control and public oversight are also necessary to ensure transparency in the implementation of these poverty alleviation programs. The state must boldly redistribute wealth and assets to reduce extreme inequality.

Furthermore, implementing the state's original authority to empower the poor requires a multidimensional approach that recognizes poverty not only in terms of income but also access to education, health, and infrastructure. The state is obliged to design programs that are not merely charitable but also sustainable empowerment, transforming the poor from objects of aid to subjects of independent development (Agustanti et al., 2022). Through discretionary policies, the government can create tax incentives and ease of doing business for the MSME sector, which is the largest absorber of labor for the poor (Fahri, 2021). Strengthening the social safety net system, including social insurance and integrated social assistance, must be expanded in scope and its distribution mechanisms tightened to ensure timely and targeted delivery. Furthermore, the state must ensure that the education and skills training programs provided are relevant to the needs of the local and global labor market, thereby increasing the competitiveness of poor human resources. The role of state-owned enterprises (BUMN) and regionally-owned enterprises (BUMD) can also be maximized to support community-based economic empowerment programs, creating decent and stable jobs. Technological innovation must be utilized to increase the efficiency of poor data collection and aid distribution, reducing the risk of leakage and misuse of funds. Consistency in implementing long-term policies is key, avoiding program changes with each change in political leadership. Finally, strict law enforcement against exploitative and corrupt practices that squander public funds must be an integral part of poverty eradication efforts.

The government has the right to issue discretionary policies to reduce poverty, a crucial and urgent authority in responding to the dynamic socio-economic conditions in Indonesia. This policy discretion allows the state to intervene quickly and adaptively, especially when market mechanisms fail to provide solutions to poverty, or when sudden crises such as pandemics or natural disasters occur. These discretionary policies often take the form of special social assistance programs, fiscal incentives for specific sectors, or labor-intensive projects targeted at the poor. The success of these discretionary policies depends heavily on accurate and real-time data on poverty conditions on the ground, ensuring that formulated programs are truly relevant to the needs of the target recipients. Discretionary authority must be used accountably and transparently, with clear limits to avoid misuse. Effective policy discretion can be a catalytic force that breaks the cycle of poverty quickly.

However, discretionary policies in poverty alleviation must always align with the national legal framework and principles of good governance, avoiding legal uncertainty and overlapping regulations. The use of discretion must consider long-term impacts and not focus solely on short-term political effects, ensuring that the solutions provided are structural and sustainable. For example, discretion to expand the scope of social assistance recipients must be accompanied by strict data verification and

validation mechanisms to maintain program integrity. Strict oversight by independent oversight bodies and public participation are necessary to prevent policy discretion from becoming a source of corruption or favoritism. Misuse of discretion can create new inequities, where groups who should receive assistance are neglected. Therefore, discretionary policies should be used as a sophisticated tool to achieve distributive justice, not as a substitute for more fundamental structural reforms. The balance between speed of action and thoroughness in planning is key to successful discretionary policies in poverty alleviation.

Strategic policies such as the Indonesian Smart Card (KIP) for College from the Central Government, the Jakarta Excellent Student Card (KJMU) from the Jakarta Provincial Government, and Social Assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs are concrete manifestations of the state's presence in efforts to reduce poverty and improve public welfare. The KIP for College directly addresses the largest financial barrier for poor children to access higher education, which is a crucial instrument in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. The KJMU complements these efforts by ensuring access to higher education for Jakarta residents from low-income families, demonstrating strong fiscal initiative at the local government level. Social assistance distributed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and related agencies, such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) and the Non-Cash Food Assistance Program (BPNT), serves as a social safety net that maintains purchasing power and meets the basic needs of poor families, preventing them from falling into deeper poverty. These three policies demonstrate the state's multi-layered approach to addressing poverty from various angles, from consumption needs to long-term human resource investment.

Furthermore, the existence of these various assistance and scholarship policies also emphasizes the state's responsibility as a welfare facilitator oriented towards improving the quality of human resources as the primary capital for national development. The KIP Kuliah and KJMU programs serve as mechanisms for creating vertical social mobility, providing equal opportunities for poor children to attain employment and a decent livelihood through education. However, significant challenges remain in the effectiveness of distribution and targeting, as extremely poor families are often overlooked due to data collection or literacy issues. The government must continue to refine the Integrated Database (BDT) and increase proactive outreach in remote areas to ensure that these programs truly reach those most in need. These programs should be seen as strategic investments that strengthen National Resilience in the social and economic spheres, ensuring the future of future generations from the threat of exploitation.

The government's fundamental option for effectively reducing poverty must include holistic macroeconomic improvements, focusing not only on increasing GDP but also on creating inclusive and quality growth for all citizens. These improvements require the government to revise monetary and fiscal policies to better support the creation of labor-intensive jobs and provide incentives for sectors with significant multiplier effects on the people's economy. The government must boldly strengthen the real sector and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which are the mainstays in absorbing labor from the poor. Furthermore, macroeconomic improvements must include structural reforms in the labor market and banking sector, ensuring easier access to credit and skills training for low-income communities. Without macroeconomic improvements oriented toward equity, any form of social assistance will be temporary and unable to permanently eradicate the roots of poverty.

In addition, the state has vital options to maintain price stability for basic necessities using legal instruments, such as Presidential Regulations (Perpres) or related Ministerial Regulations (Permen), to protect the purchasing power of the poor, who are vulnerable to inflation. Price control is crucial because spikes in food and energy prices can quickly push vulnerable families back below the poverty line. Presidential Regulations (Perpres) or Ministerial Regulations (Permen) can be used to set reference prices, control stocks and logistics distribution, and limit hoarding or speculation that harms the poor. The President, as head of government, can maximize coordination between the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the National Logistics Agency (Bulog) to ensure food availability and affordability throughout the country. Effective inflation control is the best pro-poor policy because it

directly protects the real incomes of the poor. Therefore, the combination of structural macroeconomic improvements and stable price controls is the most effective dual strategy for the state to permanently reduce poverty.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The high poverty rate in Indonesia is a structural problem inseparable from the low quality of education, creating a vicious cycle that hinders national progress and traps the country in a middle-income trap. This poverty is exacerbated by systemic failures, including unequal economic access, poor infrastructure, and the ineffective use of the 20% education budget (APBN/APBD), resulting in human resources (HR) lacking skills and trapped in low-wage informal employment. Furthermore, the lack of focus on the distribution of economic growth outcomes, instead focusing solely on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), demonstrates the state's failure to address macroeconomic issues, despite Article 34 of the 1945 Constitution obliging the state to care for the poor and neglected children.

Therefore, efforts to eradicate poverty require holistic and structural state intervention. The government, as the original authority holder, must maximize the role of its executive branch, including the President and Regional Governments (Pemda), to implement comprehensive reforms in macroeconomic strategies and poverty alleviation. Solutions offered include systematic improvements in the allocation of education funds to focus more on teacher quality and relevant curricula, as well as controlling the prices of basic goods using legal instruments such as Presidential Regulations/Ministerial Regulations to protect the purchasing power of the poor. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs (Kemensos) and local governments must transform from mere distributors of social assistance to initiators of sustainable empowerment, integrating assistance programs such as the KIP Kuliah/KJMU with skills training and job creation, while simultaneously breaking the cycle of poverty that is also exacerbated by non-economic factors such as corruption and family dysfunction.

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