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## **Study on Characteristics of Poor Households in a Village in the Regency of Malang, East Java, Indonesia**

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**Abstract.** This research looks to study the issues regarding the characteristics and the structure of poverty in households in a village, factors causing the poverty in rural households, how poverty in rural households are generally patterned and how strategies addressed to this poverty countermeasure are formulated. This research aims to describe and analyze the nature of household poverty in a village, contributing factors to it, patterns of household poverty in a village, and to formulate model employed to present countermeasure to the poverty in rural households. This research expects to gain data and information on the characteristics of poverty in rural households, the factors causing it, the patterns of rural poverty and the strategies aimed to prevent the poverty. The fundamentals of theories used in this research involve poverty web, and poverty trap (Chambers, 1983), poverty line by Sayogyo (1976), and poverty patterns and social gaps (Soemarjan, 1976). The research methods required a survey with qualitative approach. Samples were taken from two villages in the District of Kromengan, the Regency of Malang based on purposive sampling technique. The respondents were taken randomly since all households in the samples were categorized as poor, meaning all respondents had equal probabilities to be taken as samples. There were 44 samples of households. The data was collected from questionnaire, in-depth interviews in reference to interview guide, observation, and documentation. Instrument validity checking was performed by employing Pearson square correlation, while the validity of the data was assessed by means of the triangulation of sources. The data was further analyzed based on descriptive and explanative method by employing cross tabulation (crosstabs). The analysis covered individuals and the members of public or households. The research results reveal that the nature of the poverty in rural households is patterned in the structure of the following levels 1) the poorest, 2) very poor, 3) poor, and there are five contributing factors to the poverty, 1) community levies that augment residents' expenses, 2) aggravating loans; 3) increasing cost for primary needs, 4) poor education and skills, and 5) low income. The nature of the poverty in rural households follow these patterns, 1) individual poverty, indicated by individuals' ill-health; 2) relative poverty, indicated by affordable housing, 3) structural poverty, indicated by issues in starting up a business; 4) cultural poverty, indicated by poor skills and lack of motivation to utilize local raw materials; 5) poverty as a trend, indicated by the tendency of accepting this deprivation, where the residents believe that being poor is destined.

**Keywords.** Baseline, Poverty, Rural Households, Poverty Pattern, Poverty Structure, Structural Poverty, Cultural Poverty, Poverty as a Trend.

## 1. Introduction

Poverty is a national issue, where it keeps rising every year despite the fact that the government is striving to reduce the severity of the poverty even to eradicate it. According to Indonesian Statistics Bureau (BPS) urban poverty rose from 8.16% in 2014 to 8.29% in 2015. It is also true for rural poverty, rising from 13.76% in 2014 to 14.21% in 2015. Poor residents in villages also increased from 13.76% to 14.21 within the same years. This rising trend seems to be triggered by prolonged inflation throughout the months in 2015 and weakening global economy within the same years. Lack of performance of the government in accelerating poverty eradication program also serves as one of the contributing factors. Poverty only declined by 2% of 35 million poor people according to the evaluation of poverty eradication program conducted by MDGs. It is expected that the evaluation in 2015 could bring this figure further down to 5% of the 12.5% of poor people.

Indonesian government is standing on the same line to the objective of MDGs, where it should be more actively involved in countermeasure to the poverty by developing the quality of human resources. Several programs aimed to give the countermeasure through empowerment, infrastructure, and rural capacity as in *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) and *Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat* (PNPM) have been conducted. In 2001, the government even established Poverty Countermeasure Coordination Body (BPKK), Poverty Countermeasure Committee (KPK) and Poverty Countermeasure Coordinating Team (TPKP), and national Team responsible for Acceleration of Poverty Countermeasure in 2005. However, all these bodies are ad-hoc, and thus, they do not hold full capacity to significantly bring down poverty, while TNP2K is on its way to maximizing the pre-existing program.

Densely populated rural area seems to trigger the poverty in Indonesia although its nature and patterns are unknown. Data on characteristics, patterns, and factors contributing to poverty is required by conducting base line study. Poverty in Indonesia has received attention from the government since the time President Soekarno and Soeharto took office. President Soeharto, along with his ministers, managed to suppress the poverty down at 15% of 185 millions of population living under poverty line. However, this target seems hard to achieve.

Poverty refers to the condition where people cannot afford to meet their primary needs such as food and a place to live in, and poverty has now become a global issue with each country has its own way to tackle this problem. Indonesia has been on its way to tackle the poverty but has not managed to bring this poverty level even further down as expected. Departing from this struggle, this research learns that proper strategies intended to avert poverty and data on poverty as the basis to arrange poverty eradication program are required.

In the province of East Java, poverty is a never-ending problem. Back in 2006 to 2014, poverty in East Java and in Indonesia showed downward trends, but the poverty in East Java was higher above national poverty. Based on the study conducted by Montgomery in Sumarto, Suryadi, and Arifianto (2001), the majority of the poor residents are those working in an agricultural sector, and most Indonesian population relies on this sector for livelihood. People in East Java (46.18%) mostly work in agricultural sector, trade (18.80%), services (12.78%), and industrial sectors (12.51%) (Manurung & Santoso, 2015; Tain, 2013). Those working in an agricultural sector are more likely to be poor than those working in a non-agricultural sector.

Thus, poverty in the province of East Java is a central issue, and economic development in this province should be more addressed to alleviating poverty in the region over poverty at national level. This research studies poverty issues in one of the districts in East Java Indonesia by describing the nature of the poverty, analyzing the contributing factors of the poverty, describing the patterns of the poverty, and formulating the strategies needed to avert the poverty.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1 Poverty Web and Trap*

With his theory, Robert Chambers completely discusses the theory of poverty web and trap (Robert Chambers, 1983). Poverty cannot only be seen from one side of low income but must be from many interrelated aspects so that it is multidimensional (Yacoub, 2012) The poverty trap, also known as deprivation trap, covers the poverty per se, physical weaknesses, isolation, vulnerability, and helplessness (Amal, 2015; Suyanto, 2001) and all these elements are related. The five entanglements of this deficiency, according to Chambers, the ones that need the most attention are vulnerability and powerlessness (Fatony, 2017). Chambers (1995) argues that poor households are trapped in a link called the circle of demon, deprivation syndrome, or deprivation trap. The study conducted by Chambers seems to have inspired other researches observing rural poverty. In line with Chambers's idea, poverty is not only stuck around the categories such as very low income, but other factors such as physical condition, isolation, vulnerability, and helplessness also seem to contribute to this devastating conditions among households with different degree of poverty in each (Suryahadi et al., 2001).

Chambers (1983) believes that poverty is an integrated concept that embraces five dimensions: 1) poverty, 2) helplessness, 3) vulnerability to an emergency situation (state of emergency), 4) dependence, and 5) isolation, which ultimately encourages the process of poverty in various forms (Sartika, Balaka, & Rumbia, 2016). The last concept of these five dimensions, isolation, is considered important to look at in deprivation trap theory, This dimension is meant by Chambers is the location factor that causes a person or group of people to be poor (Sulistiana & Hidayati, 2020). Isolation, according to Chambers, is more emphasized on geographical aspect since this research was conducted in rural society (Suhartono, Kanto, & Mu, 2014). Chambers found out that being isolated from the outside world could drag people to poor condition. However, this dimension will be irrelevant when used in the context of urban poverty, recalling that cities provide wide accessibility. Thus, isolation is narrowed down to that related with public services.

Poverty does not always come from lack of money or low income, but other matters like health, poor education, unjust treatment before law, vulnerability to criminal act, helplessness in dealing with power, and helplessness in deciding how ones should live their life (Sawitri, Subronto, & Suryawati, 2010). Chambers argues that both internal and external factors contribute to poverty, where the former involves (1) community levies, (2) disasters, (3) physical burdens, (4) unproductive expenses, (5) blackmail, (6) and necessities that demand satisfaction. External factors involve natural disasters, economic crises and others. Sayogyo (1978) highlights four criteria concerning poverty line as equal to the need for rice: 1) the poorest, 2) very poor, 3) poor, and 4) not poor.

### *2.2 Poverty Patterns*

These patterns help find out the contributing factors of poverty. Soemarjan (1997) confirms there are five poverty patterns that help investigate what causes it:

- 1) Individual poverty is related with people's concern about setting themselves free from poverty. This is often related with people with ill health, people who are not well educated, who are financially incapable, unskillful, demotivated, and who have no entrepreneurial quality.
- 2) Relative poverty is often defined as socio-economic status (SES) that sees family or household units. This type of poverty compares families or households in a territorial community. This comparison serves as a basis to categorize people into 'rich' or 'relatively poor'.

- 3) Structural poverty is formed by the structure existing in a society, in which a group of poor community exists and becomes a part in this structure. Within the scope of this structural poverty, certain social groups suffer from facility-related, capital, and mental issues. They are also lack of entrepreneurial motivation that should help them escape from deprivation.
- 4) Cultural poverty is deprivation that lives amidst abundant availability of natural resources people can utilize to improve their quality of life. This deprivation is due to the lack of knowledge, experience, technology mastery, entrepreneurial encouragement, and social stimulation, all of which should serve as tools to discover what this nature can offer.
- 5) Poverty as a trend is a system of values or principles implying that the deprivation people are living with is not uncommon and it requires no effort to change it. That is, deprivation is destined and unchangeable. With this condition, people are forced to get used to living with deprivation, or they will feel frustrated and worried when they fail to adjust to this situation.

### **3. Research methods**

This research took place in the District of Kromengan, the Regency of Malang, East Java Indonesia. In general, this district embraces 7 villages and 20 hamlets. This district is not quite sizeable compared to other districts, but it cannot be said to be the district of the narrowest area. Location was selected based on purposive method considering that this village has the greatest number of poor households.

This research employed quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2013), quantitative research is deemed to lean more on the positivism philosophy, used to study particular population or samples. Sampling was conducted randomly, where data was collected by using research instrument. The data analysis was quantitative/statistic, and this was intended to examine the hypothesis as determined. The population in this research consists of all poor households, and several respondents were men and women as breadwinners along with their family members and village instruments (RT, RW) (Singarimbun M, 1987). Samples were taken based on Yamane formula (1979), with precision of 25% obtained from 44 households.

Data collection was obtained from questionnaire, in-depth interview based on interview guide, observation, and documentation as secondary data (Yin, 2018). The questionnaire consisted of several questions with levels of answers, distributed to 44 households. The interviews involved several questionnaire respondents, including family heads, family members, and several village instruments. The interview was intended to reveal information with the help of interview guide, and answers and data produced were expected to be more varied. Documentation as the secondary data was performed to support or to add information on the condition of the district of Kromengan regarding the number of poor population, family heads, and facilities available in the district.

The qualitative data was analyzed descriptively and explanatively to provide description about the condition of the district observed, the condition of the respondents, the characteristics of the households, and the contributing factors of poverty. This research has found out that the population in the district of Kromengan is categorized as poor households. The quantitative data or the quantification of qualitative data was analyzed by using crosstabs to elaborate the patterns and the structure of poverty. The stages of data analysis involve: 1) Data condensation aimed to elaborate data in a report; 2) data presentation and sorting; 3) conclusion, 4) data analysis.

#### 4. Results and discussion

##### 4.1 Level of Income received by Poor Households in Kromengan

In general, monthly income received by the households is deemed too low. The highest monthly income received accounts for Rp. 3,000,000 and the lowest is Rp. 400,000. Eighteen respondents (40.90%) earn as much as Rp 450,000 – 950,000, and 13 families (29.54%) admit that they only earn Rp. 200,000-Rp. 300,000 every month. The average income they earn is approximately Rp. 1,050,000 per month, while their average monthly spending accounts for 1,350,000 – Rp. 1,500,000. This condition indicates that the average income earned by rural households is still very low, and most households still struggle with their financial capacity still not covering the whole monthly needs. This indicates that rural households in Kromengan district are categorized as poor. The distribution of the respondents according to their income level is given in the following Table:

Table 1. Distribution of households according to their income and primary needs (in thousands)

Household income per month	Household primary needs per month	Number of households	Cost of daily needs not covered	Percentage of household income
400 – 1.050	1.350-1.500	18	450-950	40,90 %
1.051 -1.700.	1.350-1.500	13	200-300	29,54 %
1.701 – 2.350	1.350-1.500	9	+ 350 - 850	20.45 %
2.351 – 3.000	1.350-1.500	4	+1.000 – 1.500	9.09 %
Total		44		99.98 %

The table indicates that eighteen respondents (40.90%) have the lowest income ranging from Rp 400 – 1,050 per month with the total expense they have to spend monthly ranging from 1,350,000 to 1,500,000 per month. In other words, the households have their Rp. 450,000 to about Rp 950,000 for primary needs not covered by their income. The second group of households with the second lowest income accounts for 13 households (29.54%) with their income ranging from Rp. 1,051 – 1,700 per month and their primary need is equal to Rp 1,350,000 to 1,500,000 per month. That is, the value for their primary needs not covered by their income accounts for Rp. 200 – 300. There are 9 households (20.45%) with rather decent income ranging from Rp. 1,350,000 to 1,500,000, and they still have money as much as Rp. 350,000 – 850,000 after monthly need spending. A group of households with the highest income per month consists of 4 households (9.09%) with their income ranging from Rp. 2,351,000 – 3,000,000 monthly, and they have to spend about 1,350,000 to 1,500,000 per month, still leaving them with spare money of about Rp. 1,000,000 to Rp 1,500,000 in a month. These findings indicate that most rural households in this district still earn low income and they are categorized as poor.

It seems that they have a difficult time finding proper jobs other than those in agriculture or working in plantation. Their paddy fields and plantation they work for are not sizeable and

they do not really help them make ends meet, and the value they earn is less than that they have to spend to meet the need in a month or a day. They also seem to be trapped in a quandary since they may find it still a bit difficult to earn more money when they have to shift to other jobs like selling petrol, tire repair, construction work, and selling staple food since those will have a few numbers of customers. Covid-19 just gives additional burden to this existing economic hardship since they do not get enough access to fertilizers and seeds, to grow their agricultural produce; capital to help them with their business running is also another issue.

#### *4.2 Poverty Patterns in Society/Rural Households*

According to Soemarjan S, there are five poverty patterns studied in this research, consisting of individual poverty, relative poverty, structural poverty, cultural poverty, and poverty as a trend. In terms of **individual poverty**, as defined earlier, people with ill health account for 79.54% and those with low entrepreneurial motivation account for 63.63%. This is in line with the notion of Soemarjan S (1997) believing that this kind of deprivation is caused by ill health, physical disability, no access to education, and no entrepreneurial motivation. Moreover, relative poverty divides people into some segments categorized as rich, fairly reach, poor, and very poor. There are 39 respondents (88.63%) compared based on affordable house and good house they have, 31 respondents (70.45%) compared based on whether they have their own house or still rent a house, and 18 respondents (40.90%) compared based on their income level: very low, low, and moderate, and 35 respondents (79.54%) compared based on how big the lands that they cultivate are.

The third is **structural poverty**, where there are only 70.45% of the respondents not running any business, and 72.72% of the respondents expect to run their own business but with not enough capital, while 77.27% have money to start their business, and 22.72% admit that they have easy access to startup capital. Under this pattern, they are still categorized as a group living in poverty. Cultural poverty represents 81.81% of the respondents having no business and there are only 18.18% running their own business since this skill requires education, experience, and sufficient knowledge. Most respondents only finished their primary school and this lack seems to hamper them from starting their own business. Some respondents cultivate local raw materials but they are not in great numbers, only accounting for 38.63% and the cultivation is performed in a simple way and manually without any machine or modern facilities involved, while 61.36% of them are left with no skill to cultivate local raw materials, and 72.72% admit that they are interested in raw material cultivation.

The pattern of poverty as a trend represents 77.27% of respondents believing that this deprivation is destined and it should be accepted as the way it is. However those believing that this severity can be alleviated account for 81.81% since they seek for jobs for better income. This is parallel to the idea of Soemarjan S (1997) regarding the five patterns of poverty.

#### *4.3 Factors contributing to Rural Poverty*

This research reveals six factors contributing to rural poverty. First, economic crisis represents 88.63% of respondents believing that this crisis causes poverty, and this situation is believed to interrupt them from earning more money and making ends meet. Second, levies paid by the residents in the community are seen as another burden, where 84.09% of respondents admit that these community levies are torturing, and 72.72% believe that the soaring price of staples is another problem. Fourth, there are 61.36% of the respondents believing that lack of formal education is another obstacle that impedes them from earning better income. Fifth, there are 56.81% of the respondents admitting that loans come as a burden, and limited skills are also believed to be another issue that block their access to productive jobs (52.27% of respondents).

Table 2. Figures for respondents regarding contributing factors of poverty in rural households

Contributing factors of poverty in rural households	Number of respondents as informants	Percentage of respondents as informants
Community levies	37	<b>84,09</b>
Disasters	4	9,09
Loans	21	<b>56,81</b>
Soaring price of primary needs	32	<b>72,72</b>
Lack of skills	23	<b>52,27</b>
Ill health	2	<b>45,45</b>
Low education:		
Primary school	27	<b>61,36</b>
Secondary school	19	<b>43,18</b>
High school	7	15,90
University degree	1	2,27

#### 4.4 Model used to advert Poverty in Rural Households

In reference to the baseline, tentative model of poverty countermeasure can be employed. This model gives a general description across components of poverty countermeasure based on the characteristics of poverty, the patterns, and the contributing factors and other components that involve government agencies, political parties, non-government organizations, and business people. The model looks at the form of the poverty structure including: individual poverty, structural poverty, cultural poverty, and poverty as a trend, while the contributing factors of poverty involve community levies, rising price of staples, education, skills, and low income, in comparison to measures to avert poverty taken by the government, non-government organizations, political parties, and business people. The formulation of model used to avert poverty is given in the following:

**Figure 1. Poverty Countermeasure Model**

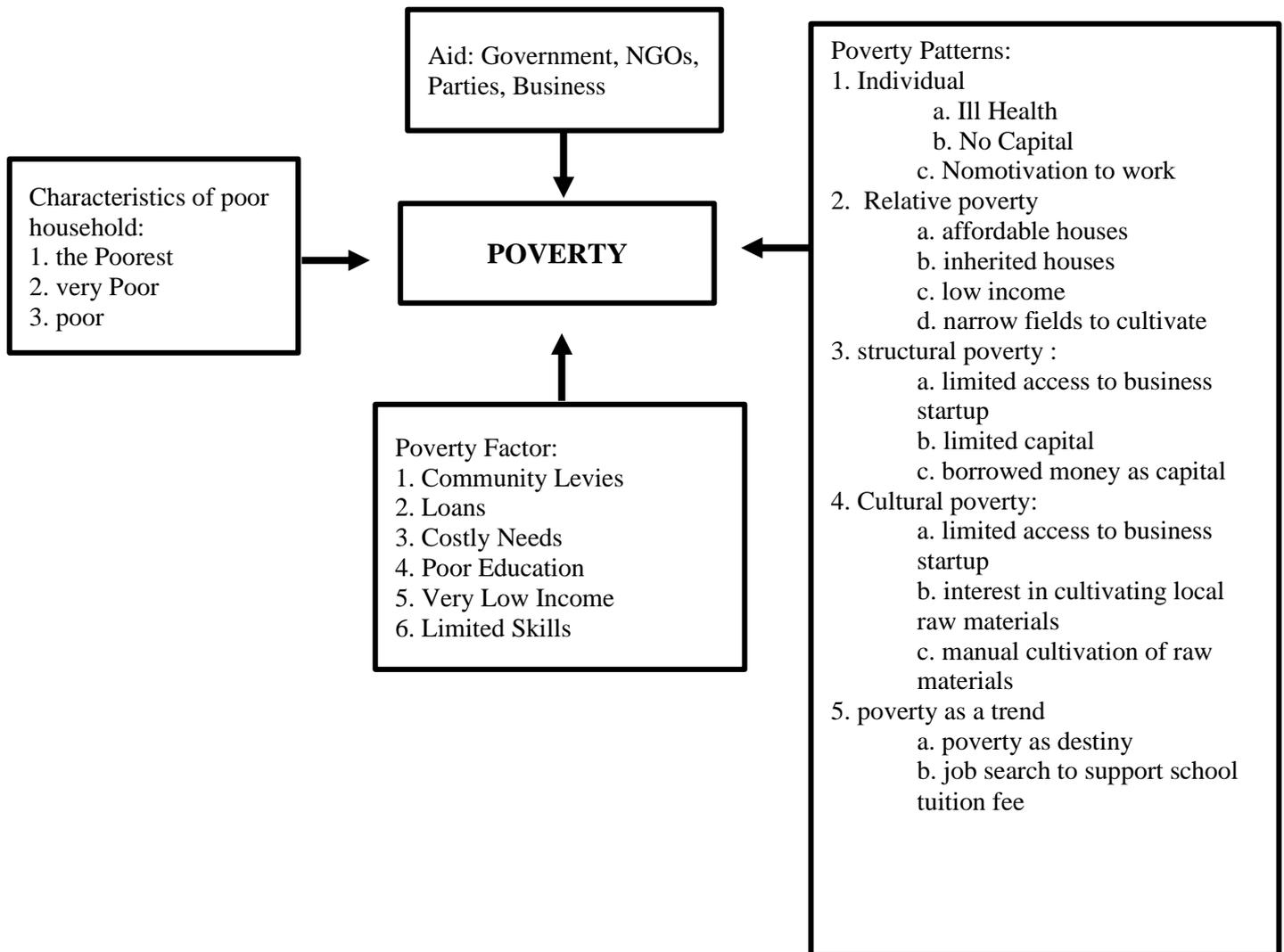


Figure 1 indicates that poverty in rural households has three different levels: the poorest (many), very poor (quite many), and poor (not many). The factors triggering poverty involve community levies, loans, soaring price of staples, poor education, low income not covering the whole household needs, and limited skills not allowing them to work or to start a business. The poverty patterns consist of individual poverty caused by ill health that impedes them from working, while the relative poverty compares the types of houses they live in and the size of lands they work on. Cultural poverty involves the condition where the locals are not capable of cultivating raw materials to finance their family since they cannot work with technology, while the poverty as a trend indicates that the locals see the poverty as a destiny and they see no reason why they should be complaining over this issue.

## 6. Conclusion and recommendations

The poverty in rural households is structural with three poverty levels consisting of the poorest with the most households categorized in this group, very poor with quite many households in this category, and poor with a few households belonging to this category. The contributing factors of poverty involve community levies they have to spend for Independence Day, rural festivals, and many more. Other triggering factors are loans, soaring price of primary needs, poor education that blocks access to productive job, and limited skills that impede increasing production.

The poverty also consists of five patterns, where individual poverty, as the first pattern, involves ill health and lack of motivation to work. The relative poverty compares the types of houses, the size of lands the people cultivate, and the low income. Structural poverty is related with problems to start up a business and to get access to capital. Cultural poverty is related with incapability of cultivating raw materials due to lack of skills and technology mastery. The last pattern is poverty seen as a trend where people accept poverty as the way it is since they believe that God destines this condition. Departing from those factors and poverty patterns, tentative model of poverty countermeasure is presented, where it describes the connection between poverty countermeasure based on the poverty characteristics, poverty patterns, contributing factors of poverty and financial aid from the government agencies, political parties, NGOs, and private sectors.

With this model, it is essential that they be encouraged to change their mindset implying that human can change course putting themselves to work to earn more to make decent ends meet instead of just accepting a particular situation. It is also important that coordination and integration among parties that involve donators, government, political parties, NGOs, and private sectors to provide aid based on the patterns and characteristics of the poverty be taken into account.

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