

Poverty Reduction Strategy in Brebes Regency

Harnie Antiek Triana

Faculty of Economic, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung (UNISSULA) Semarang, Indonesia, E-mail: harnie.triana@gmail.com

Abstract. *The poverty rate in Brebes Regency reached 14.15%, significantly higher than the national poverty rate (8.25%) and the Central Java Provincial poverty rate (9.39%) in 2025. The number of people living in poverty in Brebes Regency in 2025 was 257,290. This study aims to formulate strategic recommendations for poverty alleviation in Brebes Regency using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. The research identifies the causes of poverty, analyzes internal and external strategic factors, and formulates priority strategies for poverty alleviation. The results of the Internal–External (IE) Matrix indicate that Brebes Regency is positioned in the Hold and Maintain quadrant, which reflects a moderate level of internal strength and a moderately attractive external environment. This position suggests that the existing poverty alleviation programs have generally been implemented in the right direction. However, they should be maintained, strengthened, and continuously improved to ensure greater effectiveness, better targeting, and more optimal poverty reduction outcomes. The SWOT matrix analysis identified three priority strategies. The highest priority strategy is optimizing Village Funds, Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility (TJSLP/CSR), and government programs to strengthen economic empowerment, improve access to financing, and enhance social protection for poor households (score: 6.255). The second priority strategy is developing investment based on regional competitive advantages to increase value added through downstream industrialization by strengthening collaboration among the government, the private sector, and local communities to create employment opportunities (score: 5,786). The third priority strategy is leveraging digitalization and the National Integrated Socio-Economic Data (DTSEN) to improve the quality and effectiveness of poverty alleviation services (score: 5.668).*

Keywords: Brebes Regency; Poverty Alleviation; SWOT Analysis.

1. Introduction

The first target of the Sustainable Development Goals is zero poverty by 2030. This signifies the urgency of poverty alleviation in all countries. Indonesia is one of the countries that ratified the Sustainable Development Goals. Presidential Regulation Number 59 of 2017, which was later updated to Presidential Regulation Number 111 of 2022, is the basis for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Indonesia. The regulation states the extreme poverty target of 0% by 2030. The technical regulation governing poverty eradication in Indonesia is Presidential Instruction Number 4 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Extreme Poverty Eradication, which was updated by Presidential Instruction Number 8 of 2025 concerning Optimization of the Implementation of Poverty Alleviation and the Elimination of Extreme Poverty.

According to BPS (2016), poverty is a state of inability, financially or otherwise, to meet one's physical and nutritional needs. According to Nugroho (1995), a society is considered poor when it lacks income and cannot meet its standard of living. This standard of living does not only cover food needs but also health, education, and housing needs. According to Suryawati (2004), poor people are those whose income is much lower than the average income, so they do not have many opportunities to improve their welfare.

In line with the implementation of the Central Government, Brebes Regency also strives to reduce poverty in Brebes Regency. Based on the 2025 Brebes Regency Poverty Alleviation Implementation Report, Brebes Regency's strategy in poverty alleviation is to reduce the burden of expenditure on the poor, increase the income of the poor and reduce pockets of poverty. Activities in order to reduce the burden of expenditure include providing regional health insurance, providing cash assistance, providing food assistance, providing educational assistance, assistance to people with disabilities, abandoned children, neglected elderly, providing assistive devices, providing food, and providing clothing. Increasing the income of the poor by providing entrepreneurship training and assistance with capital and tools. Furthermore, reducing pockets of poverty by providing latrines, providing decent housing, providing clean water, building and maintaining roads.

Despite much progress, poverty in Brebes Regency remains the highest in Central Java. According to the 2025 Brebes Regency Poverty Alleviation Implementation Report, this is due to Brebes Regency's lack of responsiveness to rapidly changing central government regulations, inaccurate targeting of activities, program inaccuracies, budget limitations, suboptimal implementation of activities, suboptimal synergy between central and regional poverty alleviation activities, and suboptimal multi-stakeholder collaboration.

According to BPS data, poverty in Brebes Regency from 2016-2025 showed a fluctuating trend. From 2016-2019, the poverty trend decreased, but during 2020 and 2021 the number of poor people increased. Then during 2022 and 2024, it decreased. During 2016 and 2019, the poverty rate remained above 19% and decreased in 2018 to 17.17% of the total population. The poverty rate was 16.22% of the total population in 2019. However, in 2020, the poverty rate in Brebes Regency increased by 0.81% to 17.03% of the total population, or 308,780 poor people. The poverty rate in 2021 was 17.43% and in 2022 was 16.05%. In 2023, the poverty rate in Brebes Regency was 15.78%. Furthermore, in 2024, the poverty rate in Brebes Regency was 15.6%. Furthermore, in 2024, the poverty rate in Brebes Regency was 14.6%.

2. Research Methods

The method used in this research is qualitative analysis using SWOT. The use of this method includes observation, interview or document review activities. According to (Sugiyono in (Sinurat, 2023). Qualitative analysis is a research method based on post-positivism or interpretive philosophy, used to examine the condition of natural objects where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation (a combination of observation, interviews, documentation), the data obtained tends to be qualitative, data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results of the research are intended to understand meaning, understand uniqueness, construct phenomena, and find hypotheses.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Identification of Causes of Poverty in Brebes Regency

The results of interviews with several Regional Device Organizations showed that the factors causing poverty in Brebes Regency.

The results of the interview can be concluded that the causes of poverty in Brebes Regency are:

1. Lack of employment opportunities
2. Job vacancies in Brebes Regency are filled by people from outside Brebes Regency.
3. Low education, skills and abilities so that they are unable to compete in the job market.
4. Road conditions are not optimal
5. The large number of elderly and disabled people who are not productive

6. Many companies recruit female workers rather than male workers.
7. Inflation and rising prices of basic necessities.
8. Agricultural productivity is vulnerable to climate and disasters, agricultural product prices are fluctuating, irrigation is not smooth, agricultural product processing is not optimal and agricultural land conversion is not carried out.
9. Health problems can cause people to fall into poverty.
10. Limited Access to Business Capital.
11. Vulnerability to Social Risks and Disasters.
12. Informal work with income still below the minimum wage.
13. Infrastructure development is not evenly distributed
14. The behavior of claiming to be poor and only relying on PKH social assistance without any other efforts or work.
15. Capital assistance and training equipment are used up for consumption, not as business capital.
16. Many family members.
17. There is still a development gap between the northern and southern regions of Brebes.

The World Bank (2001) explains that poverty occurs because people lack opportunities, empowerment, and security against various risks. Low economic opportunities make it difficult for people to obtain productive employment, access to business capital, technology, education, health care, and adequate infrastructure. This condition hinders increases in community productivity and income. Low empowerment results in poor communities having a weak bargaining position, limited access to information, low participation in decision-making, and weak capacity to develop economic potential. This makes it difficult for them to take advantage of available development opportunities. Weak social protection makes communities highly vulnerable to various shocks such as job loss, illness, natural disasters, inflation, and economic crises. These shocks can worsen household welfare and cause people to fall back into poverty.

According to Kuncoro, poverty is caused by various structural factors related to the economic development process. These factors include low job opportunities, high unemployment, low

quality human resources, unequal income distribution, low labor productivity, limited access to business capital, and unequal distribution of development outcomes.

Kuncoro also explained that non-inclusive economic growth will result in increasing social inequality, resulting in the benefits of development being enjoyed by only a small segment of society. Furthermore, limited infrastructure, low investment, and weak MSME development make it difficult for the poor to increase their productivity and income.

Todaro and Smith also highlight population growth that is not balanced by job creation, thus increasing pressure on the labor market and increasing the number of poor people.

Bappenas explains that poverty is influenced by the low quality of human resources, limited employment opportunities, low economic productivity, limited access to basic services, development disparities between regions, and weak social protection.

Poverty can also be caused by cultural poverty. According to Oscar Lewis, a culture of poverty is a societal adaptation mechanism to limited social and economic conditions. When a group lives in persistent poverty, they develop certain lifestyle patterns as a means of coping with uncertainty. They have little motivation to improve their well-being.

The culture of cultural poverty has characteristics that can be observed at various levels of life, from the individual to the family to the community. At the individual level, poor people generally experience a sense of powerlessness, low self-confidence, and an attitude of resignation (fatalism). At the family level, the culture of poverty is reflected in weak future planning, low investment in children's education, and limited ability to manage household finances. Income earned is generally used directly to meet daily needs due to limited income, making it difficult for families to build savings or productive assets that can improve long-term well-being. This situation causes children to grow up in environments with limited access to education, health care, and economic opportunities, putting them at risk of repeating the patterns of poverty experienced by their parents. At the community level, the culture of poverty is characterized by low community participation in social organizations, economic activities, and political processes. Lewis observed that poor communities often have low levels of trust in formal institutions, including government, educational institutions, and financial institutions.

Oscar Lewis also identified a number of characteristics of a culture of poverty that are often found in poor communities, including low levels of education, a weak work ethic, minimal planning for the future, a low savings culture, a high orientation towards short-term needs, limited access to information, low social and economic aspirations, weak ability to manage resources, and low participation in community organization activities. Furthermore, a culture

of poverty is also characterized by a high dependence on external assistance, so that the community is less motivated to build economic independence.

Poverty alleviation efforts in Brebes Regency must be tailored to its causes. This will facilitate recommendations for poverty alleviation based on the underlying causes. The following table presents the focus of poverty alleviation efforts based on their causes.

Table Tabulation of causes, types of poverty and focus of resolution

Reason	Types of Poverty	Focus on Completion
Lack of employment opportunities	Structural poverty	Structural injustice
Job vacancies in Brebes Regency are filled by people from outside Brebes Regency.	Cultural poverty	Changing habits and cultures that do not support poverty alleviation
Low desire to compete in the job market due to lack of education, skills and abilities	Cultural poverty	Changing habits and cultures that do not support poverty alleviation
Road conditions are not optimal	Structural poverty	Structural injustice
The large number of elderly and disabled people who are not productive	Absolute poverty	Provision of ongoing assistance to meet minimum needs
Many companies recruit female workers rather than male workers.	Structural poverty	Structural injustice
Inflation and rising prices of basic necessities.	Situational Poverty	Temporary assistance
Agricultural productivity is vulnerable to climate and disasters and prices are fluctuating	Situational Poverty	Temporary assistance
Suboptimal processing of agricultural products	Cultural poverty	Changing habits and cultures that do not support poverty alleviation
Irrigation is not smooth	Structural poverty	Structural injustice

Reason	Types of Poverty	Focus on Completion
Conversion of agricultural land.	Structural poverty	Structural injustice
Health problems can cause people to fall into poverty.	Situational Poverty	Temporary assistance
Limited Access to Business Capital.	Structural poverty	Structural injustice
Vulnerability to Social Risks and Disasters	Situational Poverty	Temporary assistance
Informal work with income still below the minimum wage.	Structural poverty	Structural injustice
Infrastructure development is not evenly distributed	Structural poverty	Structural injustice
The behavior of claiming to be poor and only relying on PKH social assistance without any other efforts or work.	Cultural poverty	Changing habits and cultures that do not support poverty alleviation
Capital assistance and training equipment are sold for consumption, not as business capital.	Cultural poverty	Changing habits and cultures that do not support poverty alleviation
Many family members.	Cultural poverty	Changing habits and cultures that do not support poverty alleviation
There is still a development gap between the northern and southern regions of Brebes	Structural poverty	Structural injustice

Source: Researcher Analysis, 2026

The table above explains that the types of poverty in Brebes Regency include structural poverty, cultural poverty, situational poverty, and absolute poverty. However, in some cases, it can also be a combination of all types, known as multidimensional poverty. The focus of the solution will be tailored to the type of poverty, as explained in full below:

From the several theories above, in general the types of poverty can be divided as follows:

1. Absolute Poverty

Absolute poverty is a condition where an individual or household is unable to meet basic needs. The focus of addressing this type of poverty is providing assistance in accordance with minimum standards for a decent life, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and healthcare. The measure of absolute poverty is based on a predetermined poverty line.

2. Situational Poverty

Situational poverty occurs over a specific period due to economic or seasonal shocks. Generally, the focus of the solution is temporary assistance through social safety nets, as defined by Bappenas (2010), which aim to protect poor and vulnerable communities from various social and economic risks that could reduce their well-being. These risks can include job loss, illness, natural disasters, inflation, crop failure, economic crises, or other emergencies that cause households to lose the ability to meet basic needs. Social safety nets can also maintain people's purchasing power, prevent increases in poverty rates, and improve the quality of life for the poor.

3. Cultural Poverty

Cultural poverty is poverty influenced by cultural values, mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors that are not conducive to improving well-being. According to Oscar Lewis, a culture of poverty can form in response to long-standing poverty and is then passed down from generation to generation, affecting motivation, education, work ethic, and the ability to exploit economic opportunities. The focus of the solution is behavioral and motivational changes, involving community leaders as key communication and motivational tools.

4. Structural Poverty

Structural poverty is poverty caused by economic, social, political, and institutional systems that do not provide equal opportunities for all members of society. Factors such as unequal asset ownership, limited employment opportunities, low access to education and healthcare, and policies that are less favorable to the poor are the main causes of this type of poverty. The focus of addressing this type of poverty is equitable development, equal access to facilities and development outcomes, and minimizing biased policies.

5. Multidimensional Poverty

Multidimensional poverty views poverty not only as low income but also encompasses various deprivations in life, such as education, health, housing quality, sanitation, clean water,

electricity, and standard of living. Therefore, poverty alleviation involves a combined focus on addressing all types of poverty.

3.2. Identification and Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in Poverty Alleviation in Brebes Regency

The identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in poverty alleviation was obtained from interviews and a literature review of the 2022-2025 Regional Poverty Alleviation Implementation Report for Brebes Regency. The results are as follows:

Table Tabulation of interview results regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to poverty alleviation in Brebes Regency

No	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
1	Have a Regional Regulation on Poverty Alleviation and a Regional Regulation on Community-Based Social Responsibility (TJSLP)	Low levels of education, competitive skills and the suitability of human resource competencies to the needs of available employment opportunities.	Modernization and downstreaming of agricultural products to increase added value.	Central Government regulations are changing rapidly so that Regional Governments need to be adaptive and responsive to these policies.
2	Having a Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team and a Community Service Coordination Team	The lack of willingness of Beneficiary Families to attend Family Capacity and Improvement (P2K2) meetings means they are not productive, do not work diligently, do not dare to start a business and do not expect to receive assistance from the Government.	KUR capital policy support from government and private banks	Difficulty in getting DTSEN and slowdown in DTSEN validation updates and verification
3	Brebes Regency has a poverty alleviation action plan which contains programs and activities for poverty alleviation, including empowerment programs.	The budget for poverty is still minimal, whether from the APBD, TJSLP or other institutions.	Digitalization in public services, marketing, utilization of DTSEN and integration of poverty data and program monitoring.	Disasters, extreme weather and climate changes affect agricultural commodities; fluctuations in agricultural commodity prices; low farmer regeneration
4	Brebes Regency has potential in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, tourism, MSMEs, small, medium and large industries.	Limited Capacity of TKPKD Human Resources regarding Understanding of the concept and problems of poverty, as well	Investment opportunities in the potential and development of industrial areas that can create new jobs.	Urbanization of productive labor outside the region

No	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
		as rotation and mutation of TKPKD		
5	Collaboration has been established across Regional Device Organizations	Limited employment opportunities and limited access to capital, marketing and business innovation for poor communities	There is a policy on utilizing village funds to support the empowerment of poor communities and local economic development.	Technological advances that can replace workers and competition for labor with other regions that have higher competencies
6	The presence of village assistants and PKH assistants who accompany villages and beneficiary families	The potential of Brebes Regency has not been optimally utilized to become a productive business with added value.	CommitmentSynergy of central, provincial, district, village, business and university government programs.	The national and global economic slowdown has resulted in fewer job opportunities.
7	Brebes Regency has an Integrated Referral Service System (SLRT) as a referral service post for poor residents who need services.	Monitoring and evaluation of poverty alleviation programs is not yet fully outcome-based.	There are many vocational and training institutions based on the needs of the business world and have signed MoUs with Job Training Institutions.	Loss of community participation that does not receive assistance in village activities
8	Brebes Regency has a large population of productive age.	There is still a development gap between the northern and southern regions of Brebes Regency.	Brebes Regency is crossed by the Pantura route and toll roads, making it easier to distribute goods to big cities.	The increasing cost of living and inflation can reduce the purchasing power of low-income people if it is not balanced by an increase in income.
9	The availability of Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility (CSR) programs from the business world.		Support for national policies on accelerating the eradication of extreme poverty. Policies on the use of Village Funds for food security, community empowerment, and strengthening local economies.	The policy of decreasing regional transfer funds from the center

Source: Researcher Analysis, 2026

3.3. Analysis of Poverty Strategy in Brebes Regency

a. Analysis of Internal and External Strategic Factors for Poverty Alleviation in Brebes Regency

From the results of the identification of the internal and external environments that have been explained previously, it can be identified that the internal and external factors of Brebes Regency in poverty alleviation are as follows:

b. Internal Strategic Factor Analysis (IFAS)

Based on the results of the internal environmental identification, it can be identified that Brebes Regency's internal factors in poverty alleviation are:

1. Strengths, which consist of:
 - a. Have a Regional Regulation on Poverty Alleviation and a Regional Regulation on Community-Based Social Responsibility (TJSLP).
 - b. Having a Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team and a Community Service and Community Empowerment Coordination Team.
 - c. Brebes Regency has a poverty alleviation action plan which contains programs and activities for poverty alleviation, including empowerment programs.
 - d. Brebes Regency has potential in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, tourism, MSMEs, small, medium and large industries.
 - e. Collaboration has been established across Regional Device Organizations.
 - f. There are village assistants and PKH assistants who accompany villages and beneficiary families.
 - g. Brebes Regency has an Integrated Referral Service System (SLRT) as a referral service post for poor residents who need services.
 - h. Brebes Regency has a large population of productive age.
 - i. Availability of Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility (CSR) programs from the business world

2. Weakness, which consists of:

- a) Low levels of education, competitive skills and the suitability of human resource competencies to the needs of available employment opportunities.
- b) Lack of willingness of Beneficiary Families to attend Family Capacity and Improvement (P2K2) meetings so that they are not productive, do not work diligently, do not dare to start a business and do not expect to receive assistance from the Government.
- c) The budget for poverty is still minimal, whether from the APBD, TJSLP or other institutions.
- d) Limited Capacity of TKPKD Human Resources regarding Understanding of the concept and problems of poverty, as well as rotation and mutation of TKPKD
- e) Limited employment opportunities and limited access to capital, marketing and business innovation for poor communities
- f) The potential of Brebes Regency has not been optimally utilized to become a productive business with added value.
- g) Monitoring and evaluation of poverty alleviation programs is not yet fully outcome-based.
- h) There is still a development gap between the northern and southern regions of Brebes Regency.

c. External Strategic Factor Analysis (EFAS)

Based on the results of the external environmental identification, it can be identified that Brebes Regency's external factors in poverty alleviation are:

- 1. Opportunities, which consist of:
 - a) Modernization and down streaming of agricultural products to increase added value.
 - b) KUR capital policy support from government and private banks
 - c) Digitalization in public services, marketing, utilization of DTSEN and integration of poverty data and program monitoring.
 - d) Investment opportunities in the potential and development of industrial areas that can create new jobs.

- e) There is a policy on the use of village funds to support the empowerment of poor communities and local economic development.
 - f) Commitment Synergy of central, provincial, district, village, business and university government programs
 - g) There are many vocational and training institutions based on the needs of the business world and have signed MoUs with Job Training Institutions.
 - h) Brebes Regency is crossed by the Pantura route and toll roads, making it easier to distribute goods to big cities.
 - i) Support for national policies on accelerating the eradication of extreme poverty. Policies on the use of Village Funds for food security, community empowerment, and strengthening local economies.
2. Threats, which consist of:
- a) Central Government regulations are changing rapidly so that Regional Governments need to be adaptive and responsive to these policies.
 - b) Difficulty in getting DTSEN and slowdown in DTSEN Update and validation verification.
 - c) Disasters, extreme weather and climate changes affect agricultural commodities; fluctuations in agricultural commodity prices; low farmer regeneration
 - d) Urbanization of productive labor outside the region
 - e) Technological advances that can replace workers and competition for labor with other regions that have higher competencies
 - f) The national and global economic slowdown has resulted in fewer job opportunities.
 - g) Loss of community participation that does not receive assistance in village activities
 - h) The increasing cost of living and inflation can reduce the purchasing power of low-income people if it is not balanced by an increase in income.
 - i) The policy of decreasing regional transfer funds from the center

4. Conclusion

Brebes Regency's poverty rate reached 14.15%. This figure is far below the figures from the Central Java and Central Java Provincial Governments. Indonesia's poverty rate in 2025 was 8.25%. Central Java Province's poverty rate in 2025 was 9.39%. The number of poor people in Brebes Regency in 2025 was 257,290.

The results of the interview can be concluded that the causes of poverty in Brebes Regency are:

1. Lack of employment opportunities
2. Job vacancies in Brebes Regency are filled by people from outside Brebes Regency.
3. Low education, skills and abilities so that they are unable to compete in the job market.
4. Road conditions are not optimal
5. The large number of elderly and disabled people who are not productive
6. Many companies recruit female workers rather than male workers.
7. Inflation and rising prices of basic necessities.
8. Agricultural productivity is vulnerable to climate and disasters, agricultural product prices are fluctuating, irrigation is not smooth, agricultural product processing is not optimal and agricultural land conversion is not carried out.
9. Health problems can cause people to fall into poverty.
10. Limited Access to Business Capital.
11. Vulnerability to Social Risks and Disasters.
12. Informal work with income still below the minimum wage.
13. Infrastructure development is not evenly distributed
14. The behavior of claiming to be poor and only relying on PKH social assistance without any other efforts or work.

15. Capital assistance and training equipment are used up for consumption, not as business capital.
16. Many family members.
17. There is still a development gap between the northern and southern regions of Brebes.

Furthermore, an Internal-External Matrix analysis was conducted, resulting in Brebes Regency falling into the Grow and Build quadrant. This position indicates strong internal strength and an attractive external environment. Therefore, the recommended strategy is to grow and build capacity through investment, innovation, and program expansion. This condition indicates that the region possesses strong internal capital (e.g., regulations, institutions, economic potential, and resources) as well as significant external opportunities (national policy support, investment, digitalization, and collaboration). Therefore, the government needs to implement a progressive strategy to accelerate poverty reduction.

From the results of the SWOT quadrant matrix analysis, the following poverty alleviation strategies were obtained:

1. Developing investments based on regional superior potential to increase added value through downstreaming with collaborative synergy, the business world, and the community to create jobs.
2. Optimizing Village Funds, TJSLP/CSR, and government programs for economic empowerment, access to capital and social protection for the poor.
3. Leveraging digitalization and DTSEN to improve the quality of poverty alleviation services.
4. Strengthening the capacity and collaboration of TKPKD and SLRT in poverty alleviation.
5. Improving the competency of the workforce and poor communities according to the needs of the business world.
6. Strengthening the economic resilience of communities to climate change and price fluctuations.
7. Reducing the development gap between the northern and southern regions of Brebes Regency.

Furthermore, the results of the Quantitative Strategy Analysis (QSPM) obtained the following strategic priority order:

1. Optimizing Village Funds, TJSLP/CSR, and government programs for economic empowerment, access to capital and social protection for the poor.
2. Developing investments based on regional superior potential to increase added value through downstreaming with collaborative synergy, the business world, and the community to create jobs.
3. Improving the competency of the workforce and poor communities according to the needs of the business world.
4. Strengthening the economic resilience of communities to climate change and price fluctuations.
5. Strengthening the capacity and collaboration of TKPKD and SLRT in poverty alleviation.
6. Leveraging digitalization and DTSEN to improve the quality of poverty alleviation services.
7. Reducing the development gap between the northern and southern regions of Brebes Regency.

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