

SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE ERA OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This research is about social services for the elderly in the Covid-19 era. This qualitative research with a case study approach focuses on twenty elderly people who experience problems such as boredom, stress, lack of interaction, irritability, etc. Data collection techniques using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Research data analysis was carried out from the beginning to the end of the study. The results of the study show that: First, as humans who are vulnerable to death and are at high risk of Covid-19 transmission, the elderly age group needs to carry out social intervention through the provision of social services in the fields of religion, physical health and skills. Social services in the religious field include ways of ablution, prayer, dhikr, reciting the Koran, praying, to becoming an imam in congregational prayers at the mosque. Social services in the health sector include washing hands with soap, maintaining distance, and using masks when interacting with other people. Meanwhile, social services in the field of providing skills include skills in farming, gardening, animal husbandry, lulo dance, woven mats, etc. Second, in providing social services to the elderly, social workers do not only focus on the problems and shortcomings of the elderly, but also focus on the potential, strengths, and abilities of the elderly. Finally, to realize the social welfare of the elderly age group, the involvement of all stakeholders is very necessary, not only the government but also non-government, the business world, and society as a whole.

Keywords:

Social services; elderly; Covid-19.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is predicted to be included in the group of countries with an aging society. The number of Indonesia's elderly population continues to increase from year to year so it must be handled wisely to ensure their welfare and happiness. The 2020 Indonesian Population Census stated that the number of elderly people in Indonesia reached 9.78 percent of the total population, a significant increase compared to the number of elderly people in the previous decade which only reached 7.59 percent. The number of elderly age groups in Indonesia in 2020 reached 25.64 million people.

According to (Law Number 13 of 1998 concerning Elderly Welfare, 1998) concerning the Welfare of the Elderly in Chapter 1 Article 1 Paragraph 2 that the Elderly is someone who has reached the age of 60 years and over. Old age is defined as a decline, weakness, increased susceptibility to various diseases and environmental changes, loss of mobility and dexterity, and physiological changes associated with age. The elderly is someone aged 60 years and over, both male and female, who are still active and working or those who are powerless to earn their living so they depend on others to support themselves.

The elderly age group is an age group that is weak and vulnerable to change and has a high risk of transmission of various diseases and even death. Therefore, these elderly people must receive social services, support, and special attention. In the era of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the vulnerabilities and health risks of the elderly age group have doubled, because, in addition to trying to live a healthy life, they also have to fight hard so as not to get infected by the coronavirus. The Covid-19 pandemic has multidimensional impacts on various

aspects of life (www.who.int). The impact is not only felt by the elderly age group, but also the age group of toddlers, children, adolescents, and adults. Like other vulnerable age groups such as children and toddlers, the elderly age group also needs to receive social services in the form of attention, support, assistance, and assistance from various parties (Tuwu et al., 2020).

Elderly women face a significant risk of contracting Covid-19, from WHO data more than 95% of deaths occur at the age of 60 years or older, and more than 50% in 80 years or older. As many as 8 out of 10 deaths occur in individuals with at least one comorbidity, with cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and diabetes, but also with various other chronic conditions (www.euro.who.int). Data from WHO shows that the highest mortality rate occurs in patients with Covid-19 aged 80 years and over with a percentage reaching more than 22% (Wishnubrata, 2020).

Elderly is a period in which a person experiences a decline in changes as the final stage of life development is marked by the aging process. The aging process takes place since a person reaches late adulthood. The aging process results in changes in the decline in various functions and abilities that have been possessed by the elderly. This setback is unavoidable and will run continuously on an ongoing basis. Due to aging, they are susceptible to various kinds of bacterial infections, viruses, and diseases including Covid-19 (Ika, 2020).

Health development in Indonesia aims to increase life expectancy. Behind the success of national development, some challenges must be watched out for, where Indonesia has entered the era of the aging population with the number of elderly people aged 60 years and

over exceeding 7% Ministry of Health (RI, 2019). As a result of the aging state structure, some challenges will arise if the elderly do not get welfare services properly, thus reflecting the economic burden that must be borne.

The government and society have a responsibility to give serious attention to the elderly. Following Law Number 13 of 1998 which regulates social welfare for the elderly in dealing with the aging process of the elderly to maintain and improve the abilities of the elderly so that their physical, mental, and social conditions can function properly. The elderly in the aging process experience physical changes that are getting older which greatly affect their roles and relationships with their environment. The elderly gradually began to disengage from their social life because of the various limitations they had. The limited ability of the elderly can be observed with several aspects including social, economic, physical, cognitive, and psychosocial aspects.

The government through the Directorate of Social Protection and Security has made efforts to create a forum or means to improve the quality of the welfare of the elderly. The forum includes the Social Welfare Institution for the elderly, the Elderly Assistance, and the provision of social assistance to the Family Hope Program. Even though there are existing institutions for service delivery, both orphanages, and non-homes, the service programs that have been implemented have not shown maximum results, especially in empowering the potential of the elderly.

Government policies related to the Covid-19 pandemic, such as physical distancing, social distancing, and staying at home, limit the movement and activities of the elderly to interact with other people (Tuwu, 2020). In this pandemic era, the elderly should be given space

and activities, as well as their activities so that the elderly can forget their problems and anxieties, interact with other elderly people so that mental health and body immunity will increase (Barak, 2006).

The Elderly Social Rehabilitation Workshop "Minaula" Kendari is one of the government institutions which since 1981 has been actively providing guidance and social services to the elderly. Social service is a program or activity that is designed concretely to answer problems, community needs or improve people's living standards (Adi, 2015).

In 2020 the "Minaula" Kendari Elderly Social Rehabilitation Workshop fostered twenty elderly people. Since 2018, along with the change in the nomenclature from the original name Panti Social Elderly to "Social Rehabilitation Center for the Elderly", the system of coaching and social services for the elderly has also changed, namely initially social services for the elderly were only carried out in orphanages but now social services for the elderly can be carried out outside the institution.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, twenty elderly people who were at the "Minaula" Kendari Elderly Social Rehabilitation Workshop experienced many problems such as excessive feelings of anxiety, boredom, stress, lack of enthusiasm, physical limitations, low participation in daily activities (such as bathing, praying, etc.), poor health conditions, and less productive.

This study aims to find out how social services are provided to the elderly in the era of the covid-19 pandemic at the "Minaula" Kendari Social Rehabilitation Workshop so that they can return to functioning socially in their social environment, and they can feel happy and at ease in body and soul.

METHOD

This research is qualitative research with a case study approach (Djamba & Neuman, 2002; Leavy, 2017; Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, 2014). The subjects of the study were twenty elderly people who experienced psychosocial problems during the Covid-19 pandemic. Data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation (Minichiello et al., 1996). The data analysis technique uses triangulation, which is the process of collecting data from research informants in the field, then re-verifying the truth dynamically and interactively from the beginning to the end of the research to answer the research objectives (Neuman, 2014).

RESULT

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2012 concerning the Organization and Work Procedure of the Tresna Werdha Minaula Kendari Social Institution, Article 2 reads that "Minaula" Kendari has the task of providing curative guidance, services, and social rehabilitation, services in the form of basic knowledge guidance about elderly, physically, mentally, socially, skills training for neglected and vulnerable elderly people. In carrying out the tasks as referred to in Article 2, PSTW "Minaula" Kendari carries out the function of implementing social services which include mental, physical, and skill guidance.

The results showed that the social intervention program by providing social services to the elderly group carried out by Minaula Kendari aims to restore the social functioning of the elderly so that in their old age

they can still carry out daily life activities without the help of others, have self-reliance, and improve the welfare of the elderly. Regarding the provision of social services for the social functioning of the elderly, as stated by one of the social workers named Mr. Jasman (44 years), said that "I as an elderly social worker here are tasked with, among other things, providing social services to the elderly, where the purpose of providing social services to the elderly is to provide social services to the elderly. The purpose of this is to meet the daily needs of the elderly and to overcome the problems of life that they face daily here, such as stress, feeling lonely, and so on. With social services provided to the elderly, it is intended that they have the opportunity to show their identity and actualize their potential and abilities. In addition, the elderly, if allowed to express themselves, will increase their enthusiasm for life, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

As respect and appreciation for the elderly, the right to improve social welfare through the provision of social services provided to the elderly includes activities: religious services and mental spirituality; health services; and service skills.

DISCUSSION

1. Social services in the religious and mental-spiritual fields

Social service is a program or activity that is designed concretely to answer problems, community needs or improve people's living standards. In this paper, social services are provided by social workers to the elderly in the form of activities to meet their needs and/or overcome the problems faced by the elderly in orphanages. The problems faced by the elderly at the orphanage during the Covid-19 pandemic

were in addition to being related to health problems, they were also related to psychosocial problems. Therefore, the elderly are given activities so that they are not stressed and physically and psychologically healthy.

Social services in the religious and spiritual fields are provided to the elderly at Minaula Kendari who are Muslim in various religious ritual activities, especially aimed at the elderly who have not been able to recite the *Qur`an*, pray, Remember God (*dzikir*), etc. Social workers who act as *Qur`an* teachers, teach the elderly about how to worship according to Islam such as teaching prayer procedures, teaching morning and evening *dzikir*, reading prayers, reciting the *Qur`an*, calling the call to prayer (*adzan*), and how to become imams for the five daily prayers in congregation at the orphanage mosque. The times for teaching religious knowledge to the elderly are set after the *Maghrib* prayer, which is between 6.30-7.00 p.m, after the *Isya* prayer, which is between 7.30-8.30 p.m, and after the *Subuh* prayer, which is between 05.30-07.00 a.m. The time during the day is used by the elderly to carry out various other activities such as working, cleaning the orphanage yard, and exercising, bathing, washing, etc.

In providing social services to the elderly through religious and spiritual activities, all worship facilities and infrastructure, all tools and goods for worship are provided by the orphanage. In terms of infrastructure, materials for the Islamic religion, the completeness of worship, starting from the mosque or prayer room, prayer mats (*sajadah*), prayer clothes, skullcaps, the *Qur`an*, and others are all provided by the orphanage. This is as said by Mr. Syamsuddin, as the head of the orphanage. Regarding religious social services, he said: The role of social workers here is quite good

and we always try to meet all the needs of the elderly with the aim that the elderly become better individuals than the previous situation, namely the situation before they entered here. For potential seniors, we have prepared facilities or materials for worship such as sarongs, which are used for prayer, prayer mats (*sajadah*), prayer equipment, *mushaf*, Islamic religious books, etc.

Regarding social services to the elderly through providing needs for religious and spiritual activities, said one social worker named Fredi Sugiarto. He said that: "Yes, regarding what needs are needed by the elderly, all of that must be planned to start from all the needs and facilities needed, all of which are planned, such as the need for sports clothes, prayer clothes, wheelchairs, and room facilities, basically all of the facilities for the elderly are provided here, including tools and necessities for worship".

Regarding the provision of social services in the form of fulfilling the needs of worship and other types of religious activities, an elderly person named initials PB, said that everything related to the needs of the elderly here, such as prayer equipment, and regarding road facilities leading to places of worship (mosques) were repaired, especially for the elderly who use wheelchairs, because if the roads are damaged, it will disturb the elderly who want to go to congregational prayers at the orphanage mosque."

Social services provided by social workers to the elderly at the orphanage include learning to read and write the *Qur`an*, reciting *dzikir* in the morning and evening, calling the call to prayer (*adzan*), performing ablation procedures, praying properly, and learning to be a priest in congregational prayers at the mosque. Study time is held at 6.30-7.00 p.m

and 7.30-8.30 p.m and the time after the morning prayer is at 05.30-07.00 a.m. To learn to read and write the *Qur'an*, it is taught to use *Juz Amma* books and manuscripts. The target is for the elderly to be able to read and memorize short Surahs in the *Qur'an*, especially memorizing the last ten Surahs in the *Qur'an*. Reciting the morning-evening *dzikir* is saying the *dzikir* "*subhanallah*" 33 times, saying the *dzikir* "*alhamdulillah*" 33 times, and saying the *dzikir* "*Allahu Akbar*" 33 times, plus the *dzikir* *laa illaha ilallah muhammadar Rasulallah* so that it becomes a hundred times. The *dzikir* is always read regularly after every 5 daily prayers, and the morning *dzikir* is read after the *subuh* prayer and the evening *dzikir* is read after the *Ashar* prayer.

In addition, there are also lessons for the call to prayer (*adzan*), perfect ablution procedures, correct prayers, and learning to be an imam in congregational prayers at the mosque. The correct prayer movement also needs to be taught to the elderly, so that the quality of the *fardhu* prayer becomes better. Finally, the elderly were also taught about the procedures for becoming an imam in congregational prayers at the mosque. The main requirement to become a leader (*imam*) in congregational prayers is to have a lot of memorization of the *Qur'an*, have a good reading of the Surah in the *Qur'an*, and have matured or reached puberty.

All social services in the form of religious activities are intended so that the elderly become more patient, calmer in their hearts, more mature, feel more grateful for the blessings that have been given by Allah SWT to them, are not easily stressed, feel happier, and are mentally and spiritually healthy.

Religious and mental-spiritual services for the elderly are intended to strengthen the sense

of faith and devotion to God Almighty, which is carried out through increasing religious activities by their respective religions and beliefs.

2. Social services in the health sector

Social services in the health sector during the Covid-19 pandemic era which took place at the "Minaula" Kendari Elderly Social Rehabilitation Workshop, were given to the elderly mainly related to 3 things, namely keeping a distance, washing hands with clean running water, and always wearing a mask especially when together or interacting with other people. The three types of social services are carried out so that the elderly are not easily infected by the coronavirus from other people.

Social services in the health sector that have been provided by social workers to the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic era that took place in the orphanage were confirmed by one of the social workers of the orphanage named Jasman (44 years). According to him, during the Covid-19 pandemic era, the social services in the health sector that we provide to the elderly here focus on three things, namely diligently washing hands with soap, keeping a distance, and wearing masks when going out or interacting with other people. This is done to maintain the physical health of the elderly and to avoid the elderly from being exposed to coronavirus contamination. Another important thing, we also don't neglect the most essential health aspect, namely providing food for the elderly 3 times a day, namely eating in the morning called breakfast, eating in the middle of the day is called lunch, and eating at night is called dinner. To maintain the health and fitness of the elderly, we ask the elderly to keep doing physical activity for at least 15 minutes every day. For example, physical activities such as walking around the orphanage,

sweeping, washing clothes, etc. To ensure stamina is maintained, we also prepare fresh fruits and green vegetables for the elderly.

Regarding the social services in the health sector that have been provided by social workers to the elderly in the orphanage, one of the elderly people named the initials ZN confirmed. According to him, "I feel good when I am here because the service is good, and the social workers are also good. They are very attentive to our health needs here, for example, the need to eat is always attentive to them. We are given 3 meals a day here, if we compare it to when we were still living at home, we don't necessarily eat 3 times a day at home. All of our living needs here are met. If we need anything, we just have to ask the social worker, then it will be immediately fulfilled.

It is important for the orphanage to fulfill the food needs of the elderly. Because in reality every day there are several elderly people who live in one room in the same guest house, but they fight over food, to solve the problem they are finally moved. Regarding the elderly quarrel, this was confirmed by one of the social workers who provide social services to the elderly, namely Mr. Jasman (44 years). He said that "among the elderly problems they often fight. For example, yesterday there was an elderly person who had a fight in the same room because of food. To solve it, we have moved many elderly people to other rooms because they are not suitable for each other. By moving so that the fight between them does not happen again.

Based on the description above, health services are intended to maintain and improve the health status and abilities of the elderly, so that their physical, mental, and social conditions can function properly. Health

services for the elderly are carried out by increasing:

- a. counseling and dissemination of health information for the elderly;
- b. healing (curative) efforts, which are extended to the field of geriatric/gerontological services;
- c. development of care institutions for the elderly who suffer from chronic and/or terminal illnesses.

To create the health of the elderly, community participation is highly expected. The community has the broadest rights and opportunities to play a role in efforts to improve the social welfare of the elderly. Community participation can be done individually, family, group, community, social organization, and/or community organization. Thus, in a systematic, programmed, and sustainable manner, the health of the elderly can be realized to ensure the social welfare of the elderly.

3. Social services in the field of skills

Social services in the field of skills during the Covid-19 pandemic era which took place at the Kendari "Minaula" Elderly Social Rehabilitation Workshop, were given to the elderly aimed at overcoming boredom, and stress, while undergoing a stay at home policy. In addition to providing social services in the fields of religion and health, the orphanage also provides social services in the field of skills for the elderly. The goal is to overcome the problem of boredom, and stress, while implementing the government's stay-at-home policy in nursing homes.

The provision of social services in the field of skills is adjusted to the potential and abilities of the elderly. Before being given skills, social workers first conduct an assessment, to find out the potential, talents, interests, and abilities of

the elderly. Based on the results of the assessment, skills are then given. There are several skill programs that exist in the Kendari "Minaula" Elderly Social Rehabilitation Workshop, such as gardening, animal husbandry, matting, roofing, *lulo* dance, etc. The purpose of providing these skills is so that the elderly have a busy life, relieve boredom and stress, and acknowledge their existence.

Related to social services in the field of skills that have been provided by social workers to the elderly in orphanages, one social worker named Jasman (44 years old) confirmed that. He said that "We empower him based on the potential he has, what the problem is, then we channel the potential according to his interests and talents. For example, in this case, the elderly enjoy gardening, so we direct him to do gardening. We try to make it easier to get seeds and land or we motivate grandparents to just use this space or this land for planting and gardening. Likewise, those who like to raise livestock, please show them according to your interests and talents. As for those who like hand skills such as making roofs and weaving, we will also facilitate them. In short, we will distribute all the talents and interests of the elderly, so that the elderly do not get bored and are not stressed. With social services in this skilled field, it is hoped that the quality of life and social welfare of the elderly can be improved.

The potential and abilities of the elderly who are still healthy and strong can still be improved through the provision of various skills according to the talents and interests of the elderly. Although it is not easy to do this, based on the experience of social workers in providing social services in the field of skills to the elderly, changing the lives of the elderly can actually be done. This is as stated by one of the

social workers, Muh. Akbar following. The potential and abilities of the elderly can be explored and re-emerged from hobbies and interests when they were young. "My experience was when handling the case of the ABC grandfather who used to be gloomy and quiet, but after I explored his potential, it turned out that he could change now. After I conducted a series of interviews with people close to him, it turns out that he used to sing when he was young and when given the opportunity to express himself, he is excited again now. He's also smart lol. So I facilitated him so that he could re-express his *lulo* singing and dancing abilities. Through this activity, now he can fill his old age with positive things that can help them to stay happy in old age."

Likewise for other types of skills such as farming, gardening, animal husbandry, matting, and others. All types of skills are facilitated by the orphanage. After the assessment process is carried out based on the potential and abilities of the elderly, then they are given according to their talents and interests. This approach is called the power approach proposed by Saleebey (1996). According to Saleebey in this perspective, he views that every elderly has the power and capacity that can be utilized to develop their life.

After going through a series of social service processes, it is hoped that all the elderly who have been intervened will be able to:

- a. Guiding and giving advice wisely based on his knowledge and experience, especially in his family environment to maintain his dignity and improve his welfare;
- b. Practicing and transforming their knowledge, expertise, skills, abilities, and experience to the next generation;

c. Provide an example in the context of aspects of life to the next generation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, several conclusions can be drawn regarding social services to the elderly in the Covid-19 pandemic era. *First*, as humans who are vulnerable to death and are at high risk of Covid-19 transmission, it is necessary for the elderly age group to carry out social intervention through the provision of social services in the fields of religion, physical health, and skills.

Second, both the potential elderly and the non-potential elderly, as citizens, have the right to receive social services from the government and society.

Third, in providing social services to the elderly, social workers should not only focus on the problems and shortcomings that exist in the elderly, but must also focus on the potential, strengths, and abilities of the elderly. In carrying out assessment activities and social services, social workers develop interventions based on the results of the assessment by utilizing the client's strengths and not just focusing on problems, shortcomings, and things that are negative and pathological.

Finally, to realize the social welfare of the elderly age group, the involvement of all stakeholders is very necessary, not only the government but also non-government, the business world, and society as a whole.

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