

The UN MDGs in Indonesia: Analyzing Its Failure in Eradicating Poverty in Indonesia

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Abstract

The United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), an international development movement oriented towards human welfare and global poverty eradication with measurable goals and targets, had hit the deadline by 2015. Its implementation reaped various contestations and claims regarding its success and failures in eradicating poverty in Indonesia. The Indonesian government claimed to have succeeded (on the track) in meeting the MDGs targets in eradicating poverty by reducing half of the number of Indonesians who earn one dollar per day (purchasing power parity/PPP) for the period 1990-2015. Meanwhile, the reality on the ground showed the contrast. Many Indonesian people lived in poverty and had minimal access to public health and education facilities. UNESCAP reported that Indonesia was one of the countries in the Asia Pacific region, which was alarming to achieve the MDGs. Based on such contradictions regarding the MDGs' poverty eradication mission in Indonesia, this article aims to examine why the MDGs program had not been able to overcome the problem of poverty in Indonesia? This article employs norm life cycle (dynamics) theory to investigate the problem behind UN MDGs' inability to overcome poverty in Indonesia. UN MDGs were considered a global norm in this article, substantiating the poverty eradication mission. Using the norm life cycle theory theorizing the three stages of norm development, starting from norm emergence, cascade, and internalization, this article reviews and investigates how Indonesia had dealt and performed in each of those norm life cycle stages within the framework of global poverty eradication norm. Based on the theoretical approach used, this article argues that the inability of UN MDGs to resolve poverty in Indonesia was due to the excessive use of statistical and quantitative basis of poverty eradication efforts rather than a more qualitative and welfare building approaches. Moreover, a systemic problem existed upon MDGs' coordination and implementation on the Indonesian government and donor countries/institutions. It included the lack of commitment to official development aid (ODA) realization, renegotiation and elimination of Indonesia's foreign debt, and rampant corruption in the national development and poverty eradication funds.

Keywords: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Indonesian Government, Global Poverty Eradication, Norms