

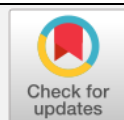
## Empowerment Model for the Poor Communities in Urban Areas: A Study on Low-Income Households in Makassar

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### ABSTRACT

Efforts to empower the poor communities in urban areas are still very urgent at this time. Although the number of poor communities in urban areas is decreasing, the rate is not significant. Empowerment needs to place poor urban as the main actors and the government as facilitators and motivators. This research aims to provide a scientific description of the causes of poverty and the empowerment model for the poor urban in Makassar city, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The research method used is qualitative with a narrative strategy. The research participants were as many as five low-income households in an urban area. The data collection technique used in-depth interviews with participants. Field observations were also made related to participants' social life and literature studies to strengthen the interview and observation data. Data analysis takes three ways: data reduction, data display, and verification/conclusion drawing. The result showed three factors that cause urban poverty: natural, cultural, and structural. The empowerment model was implemented by understanding the problems encountered, developing problem-solving strategies, understanding the importance of making planned changes, and strengthening the urban poor's capacity.

**Keywords:** Empowerment Model; Economic Development; Human Development; Low-Income; Urban Poverty

## 1. Introduction

The challenge of the Indonesian people in the era of regional autonomy is not easy. Other countries compete with each other in increasing their competitiveness. However, the Indonesian nation has failed in fixing domestic economic, social, and political problems. Behind that, there is the most pressing problems to solve, poverty. The Indonesian people's poverty conditions still reached 9.41 percent in March 2019. The number of poor people in urban areas is 9.99 million people, and in rural areas, 15.15 million people in March 2019 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019).

Meanwhile, the number of poor people in Makassar city was 66,224 people in July 2019 (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Makassar, 2019). Although the number of urban poor people is smaller than the number of rural poor people, it is interesting to study that urban low-income households can still survive. They do not feel the conditions of limitation, and their daily behavior continues, and they live life as usual.

This condition is concerning, considering that poverty is not an easy problem to overcome. The prevention includes many aspects and processes that must be passed and carried out (Hendrayani et al., 2020, p. 101). Unequal ownership of resources, minimal community capacity, and inequality of access in production cause participation in limp development. All this, in turn, causes unbalanced income acquisition and, in turn, creates an unbalanced community structure. This economic inequality can damage personal and social well-being and potentially undermine societal security (Ginting & Yusnaini, 2020, p. 4).

In general, two main factors cause poverty and helplessness, which are interrelated: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are related to problems and obstacles originating from the individual or the poor concerned, such as low achievement motivation, lack of capital, weak mastery of management, and technology aspects. Furthermore, external factors are related to institutional conditions that are not yet conducive. Besides, the lack of infrastructure and other carrying capacity causes the community's potential to be less developed.

Based on the logic of the causes of poverty and the community's powerlessness, the community empowerment strategy that will be applied must touch the community's problems, both on the internal and external sides. The concept of empowerment is to increase the community's active role (Mustikarini & Santi, 2020, p. 27). Empowerment is a process that everyone becomes strong enough to participate in various controls, influences, events, and institutions that affect their lives (Kartasasmita, 1996; Sumodiningrat, 2007; Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2013; Soleh, 2014). The essence of empowerment is to discuss how individuals, groups, and communities try to control their own lives and work to shape the future according to their wishes. Development actors are required to consistently and continuously create and foster togetherness so that the impact is not only on empowering at the grassroots level but also on strengthening its economy.

The government has made various efforts in empowering the community to cut poverty with integration and sustainability. One of the indicators to provide the development performance (development output) position achieved by a region is the Human Development Index (HDI). The higher the HDI value of a region, the higher the region's level of development performance. For Makassar city, the human development index continues to increase from year to year, as follows:

Table 1. Human Development Index (HDI) of Makassar City in 2014 - 2018

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Human Development Index (HDI)	79.35	79.94	80.53	81.13	81.73

Source: [Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Makassar \(2019\)](#)

Based on the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) criteria, HDI values less than 60 ( $HDI < 60$ ) classified as low HDI, HDI values of 60 - less than 70 ( $60 \leq HDI < 70$ ) classified as moderate HDI, HDI values of 70 - less than 80 ( $70 \leq HDI < 80$ ) classified as high, and HDI values above 80 ( $HDI > 80$ ) classified as very high HDI. According to these criteria, Makassar city's HDI since 2016 classified as very high HDI.

The achievement of HDI shows that community empowerment, in general, has been widely implementing in Makassar City. However, on the other hand, the facts show that there are still some low-income households, especially people who live in in the alleys and on the Makassar city canals'. Even though there has been empowerment implementation through various programs, the alley people still seem backward and poor. For example, there are still many slums. Besides, there are still poor people who work as pedicab/motorcycle taxi drivers, domestic helpers, scavengers, and street vendors. The work has been going on for a long time and from generation to generation.

Besides, they also have many children and cannot send their children to a higher education level, making it difficult for their children to find better work types. These conditions were forcing their children to continue their parents' work and have further consequences, the difficulty of getting out of the cycle of poverty. They do not even feel poor and leads to structural poverty and cultural poverty ([Hakim, 2019, p. 165](#)). Besides, the alley people are also identical with slum conditions, high temperament, often work as servants/salespeople/laborers because they do not want to take work risks, and their understanding of religious values is low, leading to criminal acts.

On the other hand, from the pre-field visits, it was also found that their lazy attitudes and behaviors were the cause of their poverty conditions. Preliminary research obtains information about the number of business centers in Makassar city, such as Makassar Mall, Butung Market known as a wholesale shopping center, Karebosi Link, Condotel Karebosi, and others. Urban poverty is paradoxical. The community is now increasingly well informed and critical and can filter the developing business world ([Kurniasari, 2015, p. 99](#)). In fact, in this well-informed situation and the growing business world, people can easily access types of work and then get income to meet their needs to get out of the shackles of poverty. The more community businesses develop, the more income they generate ([Layyinaturrobaniyah, 2019, p. 141](#)).

On the other hand, structurally, various community empowerments have been carried out properly by the City Government of Makassar and companies through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, including community empowerment by social institutions. However, the assistance activities, especially those originating from social institutions, are not sustainable and are intended to fulfill immediate needs. Likewise, corporate assistance programs that prioritize corporate image interests. Meanwhile, the results of empowerment activities from the City Government of Makassar are still not optimal. Social assistance programs are not just donations but must also include empowerment activities for the poor to achieve community independence ([Lestari et al., 2019, p. 290](#)). Various empowerment activities

result in community dependence on empowerment programs. Empowerment does not cover fundamental issues, for example, society's values, such as being quickly satisfied with circumstances or not having the motivation to succeed.

According to McClelland (1987, p. 13), business progress in the economic field does not occur in developing countries because people in these countries do not yet have a suitable mentality suitable for development. According to McClelland (1987, p. 13), people in developing countries do not have what is called n-Ach (Need For Achievement). One of the reasons for the lack of n-Ach is that they tend to solve their problems to their destiny. This theory explains the need for empowerment carried out at the external level, and significant is the provision of power by changing the urban poor's internal factors. This research aims to determine the empowerment model of the urban poor and the causes of their poverty.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Concept of Community Empowerment**

The center of the essence of the conceptualization of empowerment is on humans and humanity, in other words, humans, and humanity as normative, structural, and substantial benchmarks. Implied empowerment puts pressure on decision-making autonomy from a community group based on democratic aspects, focusing on locality. People will feel ready to be empowered through local issues (Bebbington, 2000, p. 8). To empower the community can be seen from three sides: First, creating an atmosphere or climate enables developing communities (enabling). So the point is that every human being has the potential to develop. No human is complete without power. Empowerment is an effort to build that power by encouraging, motivating, and raising awareness of its potential and striving to develop it to achieve the ultimate goal, an independent and prosperous society.

Second, to strengthen the potential or power possessed by the community (empowering). Apart from creating the climate and atmosphere, there is a needs to take concrete steps. It involves providing various inputs and opening access to opportunities that will make the community empowered. Therefore, the most important efforts are to improve education and health status and access to economic progress sources such as capital, technology, information, employment, and markets. Input, in the form of empowerment, related to the construction of necessary infrastructure and physical facilities, such as irrigation, roads, electricity, and social services (education and health service facilities), to reach out to the people at the lowest level, as well as the availability of funding, training, and marketing institutions, where concentrated populations are lacking in empowerment. Thus, there is a need for special programs for disadvantaged people because general programs that are in effect cannot always reach society's strata.

Third, empowering means protecting. The empowerment process aims to prevent people from becoming weak and powerless. Protection and partiality for the weak are fundamental in the concept of community empowerment. Protecting does not mean isolating or covering up from interaction. Protecting must be seen as an effort to prevent unbalanced competition. In the context of this research, protecting can mean advocating for relatively disadvantaged people.

### **2.2. Poverty and Community Empowerment**

Poverty measures, in general, consist of absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is related to individuals' inability to meet the minimum basic needs for a decent life. This concept developed in Indonesia referred to "the inability of individuals to meet basic needs" (Mawartahadi, 2005, p. 97). This definition refers to a specific minimum standard of

ability, which means that people who cannot exceed the minimum ability are considered poor people. The causes of poverty are complex and interrelated causal relations of powerlessness, fragility, physical weakness, poverty, and alienation. Poverty alleviation is an effort to empower people to be independent in economic, social, and political terms. Also, the higher the economic access, the greater the chance they can be independent in overcoming poverty problems (Chambers, 1995).

Meanwhile, if seen from the causes, poverty consists of (1) natural poverty, (2) cultural poverty, and (3) structural poverty (Sumodiningrat, 1998, p. 27). Natural poverty is a condition of poverty that occurs because, from the beginning, it was poor people. The community group becomes poor because they do not have adequate resources, natural resources, human resources, or development resources. Even if they participate in development, they only get low-income compensation. Natural poverty is poverty caused by natural factors such as disability, illness, old age, or natural disasters. According to Kartasasmita (1996, p. 235), poverty conditions like this are "Persistent Poverty"; poverty that has been chronic or hereditary.

Cultural poverty is a condition of poverty that occurs because of the culture, or customs adopted by a group of people. Cultural poverty refers to the attitude of life of a person or group of people caused by lifestyles, life habits, and culture in which they feel that they have enough and do not feel deprived. Such community groups are not easy to participate in development and do not want to improve and change their lives. As a result, their income levels are low according to the standards commonly used. The cause of poverty is due to cultural factors such as laziness, undisciplined, wasteful, and others.

Structural poverty is poverty caused by human-made factors such as unfair economic policies, uneven distribution of production assets, corruption and collusion, and the world economic order that tends to benefit specific groups. Efforts to overcome natural poverty by planning various programs and policies cause the emergence of structural poverty. However, due to unequal implementation, unequal ownership of resources, unequal opportunities cause community participation to be uneven and lead to society's unequal structure.

The factor that causes community poverty, according to Remi & Tjiptoherijanto (2002, p. 1), is the widening of income inequality. Large family expenses, unsuitable and inadequate work, and low education levels are characteristics of low-income households related to community poverty. Low-income households tend to have large numbers of family members and tend to have high birth rates. Child mortality rates in low-income households are also relatively high due to a lack of income and access to their children's health and nutrition fulfillment. Thus, many family members can hinder the increase in human resources in the future, especially children. Children in this condition will find it difficult to get out of poverty and tend to be the heirs of poverty from their parents.

Efforts are needed to integrate various development policies and programs in various sectors to overcome poverty. According to Sumodiningrat (1998, p. 38), poverty alleviation policies categorize into two, indirect and direct policy. Indirect policies include 1) efforts to create peace and stability in the economic, social, and political situation. 2) controlling the population, and 3) preserving the environment and preparing training activities for the poor communities. Meanwhile, direct policies include 1) developing primary data in determining target groups. 2) providing basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, health, and education). 3) creation of job opportunities. 4) regional development program, and 5) credit services.

Efforts to reduce poverty must be chosen strategies to strengthen people's economic role and position in the national economy. Structural changes include allocating resources, strengthening institutions, and empowering human resources (Sumodiningrat, 1998, p. 43). The

program chosen must side with and empower the community through economic development and improvement of its economy. Implementing strategic steps in this program aims to expand the poor's access to development resources and create opportunities for the poor to participate in the development process to overcome their underdevelopment. Besides, efforts to reduce poverty must rely on determining the right poverty line and a clear understanding of the problem's causes.

There are three approaches to empowering the poor: First, the directed approach means that community empowerment must be directed, namely in favor of the poor. Second, the group approach, which means together to facilitate the solution of the problem at hand. Third, an assistance approach, which means that during the process of forming and organizing poor communities, it is necessary to be accompanied by professional facilitators as facilitators, communicators, and dynamists towards groups to accelerate the achievement of independence (Soegijoko & Kusbiantoro, 1997; Sumodiningrat, 2009; Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2013). Besides, Fadilah et al. (2019) suggested the stages of community social empowerment, namely: the mental development stage, the group activity stage, and the capacity building activity stage. The realization of a new development strategy in the form of 1) partiality and empowerment of the community, 2) strengthening of autonomy and decentralization, and 3) modernization through sharpening the direction of change in the socio-economic structure of society (Sumodiningrat, 2007, p. 110). To realize the new direction of development, the government needs to sharpen developing development strategies by strengthening community development institutions and the bureaucracy. Institutional strengthening through using a participatory development model aims to develop community capacity and bureaucratic apparatus's ability to carry out government institutions' functions oriented to the people's interests (good governance), not the authorities' interests.

Several alternative strategies for empowering the poor include 1) strategies aimed directly at overcoming community powerlessness, such as overcoming food and nutrition shortages problems in toddlers and breastfeeding mothers by providing cheap or free nutritious food. 2) directing to produce their foodstuffs such as rice or corn. 3) strategies to increase local resource-based economic activities in an area. 4) strategies aimed at improving the condition of damaged and unsustainable agroecosystems. 5) strategies to improve the order of low-income people (Pranadji, 2003; Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2013; Hikmat, 2013). Empowerment strategies need to take steps that involve the community to actively participate by using a communication approach that allows people to have the ability to solve their problems, have freedom of opinion, expression, and express themselves openly to one another (Nugroho et al., 2016, p. 255).

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Strategy**

There are five qualitative research strategies proposed by Creswell (2010, pp. 20-21), ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenology, and narrative. This research uses a narrative strategy. According to Creswell (2010, p. 21), the narrative is a research strategy to investigate individuals' lives and ask a person or group of individuals to tell their lives. The narrative strategy deemed suitable for use because the researcher investigates urban low-income households' lives and asks them to tell their lives. Then the researcher combines the views about the participants' lives with the views on the researcher's life.

### 3.2. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection used observation, interviews, and literature and documents study. The research location is in Makassar city, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, with the research subjects consisting of 5 urban low-income households. Participants were selected deliberately and in full consideration, consisting of DG, aged 64, with disabilities (weak legs), and cannot walk. HS, aged 40, and MF, aged 45, work as construction workers with low income. MS, aged 30, and HG, aged 50, work in the informal sector as street vendors and are categorized as poor people. Researcher going directly to the field to observe the participants' behavior and activities at the research location. In this observation, the researcher recorded the activities of the participants at the research location. Besides, literature and documents were also studied to strengthen data from interviews and observations.

### 3.3. Data Analysis Technique

Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing, iterative, and continuous effort. Therefore, it is impossible to separate data collection and data analysis from one another. Both take place simultaneously. The process is cyclical, not linear. Therefore, the data analysis used is an interactive model known as a three-way technique, namely data reduction, data display, and verification/conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1992, p. 20; Bungin, 2015, p. 69), as follows:

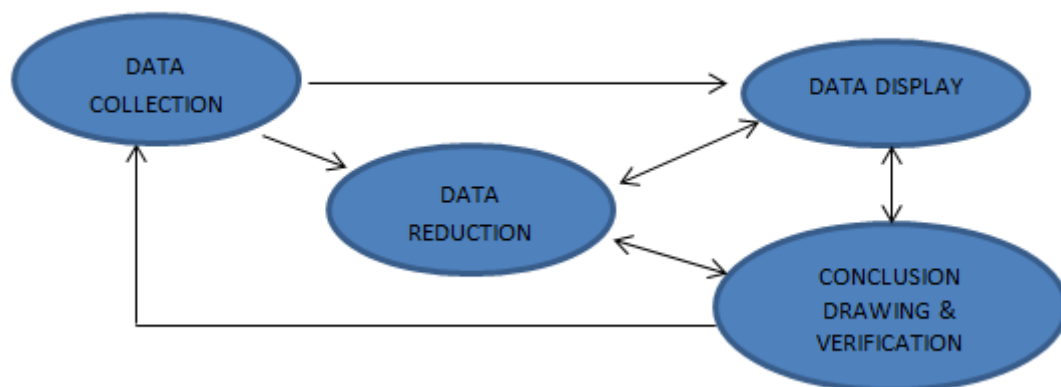


Figure 1. Components of Interactive Model Data Analysis

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Poor Community Empowerment Strategy

The poor who live in the alleys and on the Makassar city canals' tends to have a lazy nature. They have no drive to succeed. Assistance for the poor, both from the city government and companies, which are part of its social responsibility program, cannot be appropriately utilized. The implementation of community empowerment programs from 1995 to 1999 included the District Development Program, the Urban Poverty Reduction Program, the Regional Empowerment in Overcoming the Impact of the Economic Crisis, the Local Government Environmental Development Program, and the Joint Business Group. Likewise, starting in 2007, the National Independent Community Empowerment Program comprised two main programs: the District Development Program and the Urban Poverty Reduction Program.

In the 2014-2019 period, Mayor of Makassar, Ir. Ramdan Pamanto, and Deputy Mayor of Makassar, Dr. Syamsu Risal, M.Sc., made various policies or community empowerment programs called Badan Usaha Lorong (BULO) by adopting a cooperative system. This

program's main objective is to encourage the development and productivity of around 7,520 alleys in Makassar city to continue the alley restoration master plan in Makassar city. Besides, there is assistance from the city government, including *Program Beras Sejahtera* (Subsidized Rice Program), *Bantuan Langsung Tunai* (Cash Assistance Program), *Program Keluarga Harapan* (Family Hope Program), revolving and sustainable capital assistance, and the establishment of Waste Banks in various villages to empower the urban poor. In the Waste Banks model, savings and loan institutions are also explicitly established for Waste Bank customers. The ultimate goal of this program is to make poor people independent. Even if the program is no longer sustainable or ends, the target communities can continue their business.

The urban poor communities empowerment program comes directly from the city government and Bank Indonesia through a microfinance program with Regional Development Banks and Rural Banks in collaboration with Community Development Financial Institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations. Changes in structure naturally represent the success of community empowerment programs. Structural change can occur if local capacity increases significantly, and welfare increases gradually and sustainably. In reality, the number of poor people has not decreased, and their work type has not changed either. Changes in structure and a significant increase in local capacity are indicators of the success of community empowerment.

The interviews with participants indicated that they had received assistance from the city government consisting of capital funds or rice but were still in poverty. These social welfare efforts only provide social assistance to the poor to meet their short-term life needs. If this program continues, it can create dependence on the target group. Therefore, it is imperative to integrate assistance programs with community empowerment through various interventions such as improving communication skills, self-confidence, motivation, independence, creating social relationships, and building networks.

Besides, it is necessary to form local organizations or similar groups to make changes, both legally and formally, and increase awareness, capacity, social services management, and non-formal education. The results of in-depth interviews with participants show that the participants do not join any organization. There is no transfer of knowledge. They still see the city government's assistance program as an assistance program to meet their urgent needs. Meanwhile, they have low levels of education and skills. This condition reflects the need for a significant shift in the city government's role, from a social service provider to a facilitator, mediator, coordinator, mobilizer, and educator. Its aim that the urban poor as the target group can significantly increase their knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Meanwhile, guidance is needed to local organizations such as non-governmental organizations and other community groups to act as agents of change for the poor or vulnerable groups.

The types of poverty in five research participants consist of natural poverty, cultural poverty, and structural poverty. The cause of natural poverty for one of the participants is the inability to get a decent life due to disability and physical weakness. One of the participants, DG, aged 64, became a beggar due to disability and physical weakness. DG always receives assistance from the city government through the Prosperous Rice Program (*Beras Sejahtera* or *Rastra*) and the Cash Assistance Program (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai* or *BLT*). This empowerment strategy is perfect for those who rely solely on aid programs to survive.

Two other participants belong to the category of cultural poverty. Judging from the physical condition, HS, aged 40, and MF, aged 45, who work as construction workers, participants should work diligently and behave frugally. Their lazy culture makes the resources in their environment unusable. They have not been able to make fair use of their time while working as



construction workers. They only work four days a week so that their income can only meet basic needs, and there is nothing to save for their future. They are satisfied and happy with the income they receive.

Other participants are MS, aged 30, and HG, aged 50. Both participants work in the informal sector with a low education level and run businesses as street vendors. Their low educational status causes them to have fewer opportunities and categorized in structural poverty. Access to sources of capital is minimal. They admit that they receive capital assistance from banks but have difficulty repaying loans because they cannot compete with larger capital owners. Besides, they have low-skills in managing a business, which results in their low income. Each type of poverty certainly requires an empowerment model or strategy appropriate to the target group's situation.

The empowerment model or strategy undertaken by the government is to provide awareness of the circumstances experienced. Without going through a process of awareness, it is difficult for them to recognize their problems, including difficulty finding solutions. Interviews with participants obtained information that they had received awareness-raising activities but were limited to counseling. However, the awareness process can also through education and training.

The next stage is to understand the target group. There has been a gap between the existing conditions (reality) and the expected conditions. At this stage, an understanding of the various factors that cause problems, consisting of conditions of natural resources, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, institutions and accessibility, and the socio-cultural and political environment, includes identifying strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and challenges they face. It aims to develop the right strategy to solve the problem by analyzing these two factors.

The city government's task as a facilitator is to help them analyze their strengths and weaknesses, analyze opportunities and challenges, and formulate appropriate alternatives to solve their problems. As a facilitator, the city government has helped the poor solve problems and provided various considerations of the risks that will be faced. Life is a change. Thus it is necessary to show the target group the importance of change. Whether we realize it or not, changes occur all the time regarding changes in the natural environment and the socio-economic, cultural, and political environment, including local, regional, national scale, and even global levels. Thus the poor need to be shown the importance of making planned changes and preparing themselves to anticipate any changes.

Meanwhile, planning for change requires testing so that the changes made can be solutions to problems. Change must follow the current conditions of society. The results of the change trial are crucial information for the target group. The next step is to strengthen capacity by providing wider opportunities for target groups to convey creative ideas related to information accessibility, capital, and meeting the needs of the entire planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation process and the accountability of an activity.

## **4.2. Determinants of Urban Poverty**

The results of observations and interviews with participants obtained information that apart from natural factors, namely the inability to obtain a decent life due to disabilities and physical weakness, two other factors are causing urban poverty: cultural factors and structural factors. The most dominant cultural factors are laziness to work and lack of motivation to achieve (n-Ach). Satisfaction on attainment and happiness with their current state or status keeps them in poverty. Individuals who have high n-Ach will perform well if they are in a work

situation. By having achievement motivation (n-Ach), it is wide open to get out of poverty. Another characteristic of the participants is not working optimally. The opportunity to work seven days a week but only work four days a week shows that they are not working optimally. The income earned is only used to meet daily needs and does not consider saving for the future.

Besides, the research participants also had a low level of education. The low level of education results in a low level of skills, which results in limited job options. Their job option only in the informal sector, such as street vendors and hawkers. On the other hand, their business capital comes from bank loans. Tight business competition, low business management skills, and the obligation to pay for capital loans are also factors that cause them to remain in poverty.

## 5. Conclusion

The empowerment model for the poor urban community includes providing awareness to the poor in counseling, affirming gaps between ideal conditions and real conditions and their causative factors, analyzing strengths and weaknesses, understanding the importance of change, and strengthening target groups' capacity. Some people living in the alleys and on the Makassar city canals' banks remain in poverty even though the government provides several empowerment programs because of their laziness to work and tend to give up. Besides, they also have a low level of education and lack of skills, making it difficult to find jobs that can support them. Therefore, this research is the initial basis for future studies to examine the causes of the poor not being able to be independent and out of poverty and examine city governments' role in alleviating urban poverty.

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The author has declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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