

**Realizing Public Welfare from the Nation's Kitchen: A Fiqh Siyasah
Perspective on the Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) and Its Impact on the
Muslim Community**

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Abstract: The Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) program is a government social policy designed to enhance public welfare, particularly for low-income groups vulnerable to malnutrition and poverty. The program functions not only as food assistance but also as an instrument of economic redistribution and social solidarity at the grassroots level. From the perspective of fiqh siyasah (Islamic political jurisprudence), public policy must be based on the principles of justice (al-‘adālah) and public welfare (al-maṣlaḥah al-‘āmmah), ensuring equitable and sustainable prosperity for society. This research uses a qualitative field approach. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with beneficiaries, school administrators, religious leaders, and local government officials involved in implementing the MBG program. Direct observations were conducted in several schools and Muslim communities to gain empirical insights into the program’s actual impact. Secondary sources, including policy documents, government regulations, and relevant scholarly literature, complemented primary data and strengthened analytical interpretation. The findings show that the MBG program has reduced the economic burden on low-income families, increased children’s school attendance, and encouraged stronger social cohesion. Nevertheless, problems remain, including distribution delays, limited budgets, and insufficient transparency in fund management. Based on a fiqh siyasah analysis, the success of public policy depends on integrity (amānah), accountability, and just governance. Therefore, participatory and transparent

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mechanisms are essential to ensure that the MBG program truly promotes *maṣlaḥah* in line with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The academic contribution of this study lies in its attempt to connect empirical evidence with the theoretical framework of *fiqh siyasah*, offering an Islamic value-based model for the design, implementation, and evaluation of social policy in modern states.

Keywords: Community Welfare; *Fiqh Siyasah*; Free Nutritious Meal (MBG); Public Policy.

Abstrak: Program makan bergizi gratis (MBG) merupakan salah satu kebijakan sosial pemerintah yang bertujuan meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat, khususnya bagi kelompok berpenghasilan rendah yang rentan terhadap masalah gizi dan kemiskinan. Kebijakan ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai bentuk bantuan pangan, tetapi juga sebagai instrumen pemerataan ekonomi dan penguatan solidaritas sosial di tingkat akar rumput. Dalam perspektif *fiqh siyasah*, kebijakan publik seharusnya berlandaskan pada prinsip keadilan (*al-ʿadālah*) dan kemaslahatan umum (*al-maṣlaḥah al-ʿāmmah*), agar mampu menghadirkan kesejahteraan yang merata dan berkelanjutan bagi seluruh lapisan masyarakat. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan masyarakat penerima manfaat, pengelola sekolah, tokoh agama, dan aparat pemerintah daerah yang terlibat dalam pelaksanaan program makan bergizi gratis. Selain itu, observasi langsung dilakukan di beberapa sekolah dan komunitas Muslim di wilayah penelitian untuk memperoleh gambaran empiris mengenai pelaksanaan dan dampaknya di lapangan. Data primer kemudian dipadukan dengan data sekunder yang diperoleh melalui dokumen kebijakan, laporan pemerintah, dan literatur tentang kebijakan publik dalam perspektif Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program makan bergizi gratis memberikan dampak positif dalam meringankan beban ekonomi keluarga, meningkatkan partisipasi anak di sekolah, serta memperkuat solidaritas sosial di masyarakat Muslim. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan sejumlah kendala, seperti keterlambatan distribusi, keterbatasan anggaran, dan kurangnya transparansi dalam pengelolaan dana. Berdasarkan analisis *fiqh siyasah*, keberhasilan kebijakan publik seperti ini sangat bergantung pada amanah dan akuntabilitas penyelenggara. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan tata kelola yang partisipatif dan transparan agar program makan Bergizi gratis benar-benar membawa *maṣlaḥah* sesuai dengan tujuan *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* dalam mewujudkan keadilan dan kesejahteraan umat. Kontribusi akademik penelitian ini terletak pada upayanya menghubungkan data empiris kebijakan sosial dengan kerangka teoretis *fiqh siyasah*, menghadirkan perspektif baru dalam studi tata kelola publik berbasis nilai-nilai Islam. Penelitian ini memperkaya wacana hukum Islam kontemporer dengan mengintegrasikan prinsip keadilan distributif, akuntabilitas moral, dan etika pemerintahan Islami dalam analisis kebijakan publik. Selain itu, kajian ini menawarkan model konseptual tentang bagaimana *fiqh siyasah* dapat diterapkan secara praktis dalam formulasi, implementasi, dan evaluasi kebijakan sosial di negara modern.

Kata Kunci: Fiqih Siyasah; Kebijakan Publik, Kesejahteraan Masyarakat; Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG).

Introduction

The Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) program has become one of the social policies that has attracted attention in various countries, including Indonesia, as a form of state commitment to tackling poverty and social inequality. This program is not only intended to meet the basic food needs of the community, but also serves as a human development strategy that emphasizes the importance of balanced nutrition for improving the quality of human resources, especially among schoolchildren and low-income groups. By providing nutritious, affordable food, this policy is expected to reduce stunting rates, improve student concentration, and increase overall community productivity.¹

In the Indonesian context, this program has strategic significance because it aligns with the national development agenda, which prioritizes the welfare of the people. However, the effectiveness of MBG policies depends heavily on transparent governance, sustainable funding, and community involvement in oversight. This kind of social policy is not only related to economic and health aspects but also has moral and spiritual dimensions that can be studied through the perspective of fiqh siyasah, a branch of jurisprudence that discusses the management of public affairs within the framework of sharia principles.²

In the view of fiqh siyasah, public policies such as MBG must be based on the values of justice (*al-'adālah*), the public good (*al-maṣlaḥah al-'āmmah*), and the moral responsibility of rulers towards their people (*al-amānah*). Thus, the implementation of this program is not only understood as an administrative activity but also as a tangible manifestation of Islamic values in governance oriented towards the welfare of the people. This approach opens up space for the reinterpretation of modern public policy in light of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah—the noble goals of Islamic shari'a that emphasize protection, justice, and social well-being.³ Therefore, it is important to understand how fiqh siyasah assesses the policy of free nutritious eating, as well as its impact, response, and influence on Muslim society.

Fiqh siyasah emphasizes that leaders have the responsibility to ensure the welfare of their people, including food security. In the history of Islam, similar policies have been implemented, such as the policy of Umar bin al-Khattab, who established Baitul Mal to

¹ Albaburrahim Albaburrahim et al., 'Free Nutritious Meal Programme: A Critical Analysis of Indonesia's Education Transformation Towards the Golden Generation 2045', *Entity: Journal of Social Sciences and Social Sciences Education*, 5 May 2025, 767–80, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ejps.v1i.19191>.

² Rif'iy Qomarrullah et al., 'The Long-Term Impact of Free Nutritious Meal Programs on Health and Educational Sustainability', *Indonesian Journal of Intellectual Publication* 5, no. 2 (March 2025): 130–37, <https://doi.org/10.51577/ijpublication.v5i2.660>.

³ Wahijul Kadri and Nurul Hidayah Tumadi, "Siyasah Syarīyah & Fiqih Siyasah," *Siyasah: Journal of Constitutional Law* 5, no. II (2022).

distribute necessities to people in need.⁴ In this context, free nutritious meals can be seen as a form of government concern for its people's welfare, as well as reflecting the principles of social justice in Islam. The impact of the free nutritious meal policy on the Muslim community can be analyzed from various aspects. From an economic point of view, this program can help ease the burden of spending on low-income families, allowing them to allocate funds to other needs, such as education and health. From a social perspective, this policy can increase solidarity and concern among citizens, as well as reduce social disparities.⁵ In addition to its positive impact, the free nutritious meal policy has also elicited various responses from the Muslim community. Some support this policy because it is considered in line with Islamic values that emphasize concern for people on low incomes. However, some question the effectiveness and the source of funding for this program, primarily whether the budget is funded by taxes that burden the community. In *fiqh siyasah*, state financial management must be carried out transparently and fairly so that policies do not cause inequality or abuse.

The influence of the free nutritious meal program on the Muslim community also needs to be studied from moral and religious aspects. In Islam, sharing food and helping others are highly recommended practices. However, there are concerns that the program could lead to a reliance on government aid and reduce the spirit of hard work among beneficiaries. Therefore, this policy needs to be balanced with efforts to empower the community so that they remain productive and independent.⁶ Research on free, nutritious eating from the perspective of *fiqh siyasah* is important to conduct to understand how Islam regulates social policies with broad societal impact. By examining its impact, response, and influence, it is hoped that solutions can be found that align with Islamic principles for managing public policy.

Based on this description, the main question to be answered in this study is how the concept and principles of *fiqh siyasah* can be used to analyze the Free Nutritious Eating (MBG) policy in Indonesia, especially in assessing its social, economic, and moral impact on the Muslim community, as well as how this policy can be implemented effectively without causing dependence, while upholding the value of justice (*al-'adālah*), and realizing the common good (*al-maṣlaḥah al-'āmmah*) in accordance with the purpose of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. Thus, this study will discuss in greater depth how free, nutritious eating is understood in *fiqh siyasah*, as well as how this policy can be implemented effectively without causing inequality or dependence. This approach is expected to provide the government, ulama, and the community with insights for formulating policies based on Islamic values and the benefit of the ummah.

⁴ Muhammad Iqbal, *Fiqh Siyasah Contextualization of Islamic Political Doctrine* (Kencana, 2016), 56.

⁵ I. Wayan Lendra, Daud Husni, and Yuyun Fitriani, 'Free Nutritious Eating Policy and Its Relevance to Good Governance Values: Qualitative Analysis in Public Administration', *Social Journal and Humanities Flow* 5, no. 1 (April 2025): 937–45, <https://doi.org/10.57250/ajsh.v5i1.1252>.

⁶ Ucu Agustini, 'The Effectiveness and Challenges of Free Nutritious Meal Programs as an Educational Intervention in Indonesia', *Journal of Educational Work* 4, no. 3 (July 2025): 362–68, <https://doi.org/10.33578/kpd.v4i3.p362-368>.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method, combining a literature review and field research, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the free nutritious meal program from the perspective of *fiqh siyasah*.⁷ At the literature review stage, the researcher examined various primary and secondary sources, including classical and modern fiqh books, works of siyasah syar'iyah scholars, academic journals, Islamic public policy books, and government regulations related to the free nutritious meal program. This literature review aims to identify the normative foundations and relevant Sharia principles for designing social policies grounded in justice and welfare.

Furthermore, the field research was conducted through in-depth interviews and participatory observation with several parties involved, including scholars, academics, local government officials, program implementers, and beneficiary communities. This step is intended to understand how the free nutritious eating policy translates in practice, including perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced on the ground. The data obtained were then analyzed descriptively-critically using *the fiqh siyasah* framework to assess the extent to which the implementation of the program reflected Islamic values of fair governance, social concern (*maslahah 'ammah*), and welfare distribution. Thus, this study not only explains the theoretical concept of free nutritious eating in Islam but also offers an empirical analysis of its impact on the well-being of Muslim communities and provides constructive recommendations for the improvement of socially just public policies.

Results and Discussion

Free Nutritious Eating Policy from the Perspective of Fiqh Siyasah

In fiqh siyasah, public policies related to the welfare of the community must be based on the principles of justice and benefit. Imam al-Mawardi in *Al-Ahkam as-Sulthaniyyah* said that the government has a responsibility to ensure the welfare of its people, including in fulfilling basic needs such as food. This concept also aligns with *maqāṣid as-syar'ah*, which emphasizes the protection of the soul (*hiḍ an-naḥs*) and property (*hiḍ al-māl*). In addition, from the perspective of fiqh siyasah, public policies such as free nutritious meals must consider long-term sustainability and effectiveness. This is in accordance with the principle of *as-siyasah as-syar'iyah*, which is that policies taken by the government must provide tangible benefits to the community without causing greater harm.⁸ Therefore, the funding and distribution mechanisms in this program must be appropriately managed to avoid excessive dependence or a fiscal burden on the state.

Furthermore, the principle of *al-maslahah al-mursalah* is also relevant in the discussion of this policy. *Al-maslahah al-mursalah* refers to benefits that are not explicitly mentioned in the *nash shar'i* but are still in line with the purpose of sharia. In this context, free nutritious meals

⁷ S. Pt Amruddin, "Quantitative paradigm, theory and literature study," *Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methodology* 1 (2022).

⁸ Fanny Ika Septiani, Nadia Rosiana, and Alisa Azzahra, "The Impact of Free Lunches on State Financial Conditions and Improving the Quality of Education," *JUPENSAL: Journal of Universal Education* 1, no. 2 (2024): 191–96.

can be considered policies that benefit society, especially for vulnerable groups such as schoolchildren, low-income workers, and people experiencing poverty. However, for this program to deliver tangible benefits, the government must ensure that the funds used are derived from halal income and do not unfairly burden the community.

On the other hand, the principle of *al-'is* (justice) in *fiqh siyasah* requires that this policy be applied equally and non-discriminatory. The free, nutritious meal program must reach all people in need without any element of political interests or favoritism toward certain groups. This refers to the concept of government in Islam, oriented towards public service (*ri'ayah syu'un al-ummah*), in which the state plays an active role in the welfare of its people without discriminating against their social, economic, or political backgrounds.⁹ Thus, the policy of free nutritious eating from the perspective of *fiqh siyasah* can be considered as a form of government responsibility in realizing social justice and community welfare. However, its implementation must be carried out with great care to avoid negative impacts, such as community dependence or misuse of public funds. Therefore, a sharia-based approach to program management is essential to ensure that the benefits can be widely and sustainably achieved.

Economic and Social Impact on Muslim Communities

This study found that free nutritious eating policies have a significant economic impact on low-income communities. Based on the literature, this program can help reduce household expenses, allowing families to allocate their budgets to other needs such as education and health.¹⁰ From the social side, this policy contributes to reducing social inequality and increasing solidarity between citizens. However, if not managed properly, these policies can also lead to dependence on government assistance, which is contrary to the spirit of hard work and independence taught in Islam. In addition, from a macroeconomic perspective, free nutritious meal programs can positively impact the growth of the food and culinary sector. With this policy, demand for foodstuffs increases, thereby encouraging the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the food sector, especially those labeled halal.

The findings of this study show that the free nutritious meal program aligns with the principle of *hisbah* in Islam, a system of supervising economic activities to ensure that the distribution of goods and services is fair, transparent, and does not harm any party. This principle is reflected in the view of one of the speakers, Ustaz M. Fadli, who emphasized the importance of maintaining halal and the quality of the food distributed. He stated that the free nutritious meal program is indeed excellent because it helps people experiencing poverty, but the government must ensure that the ingredients and products used meet *halal* and *thayyib standards*. Thus, this program not only emphasizes the quantity of aid but also pays attention to sharia values that underpin the welfare of the Muslim community.

On the social side, interviews with beneficiaries in the East Metro area show that this program helps strengthen *ukhuwah islamiyyah* in the community. Most of the respondents admitted that food distribution activities foster a sense of togetherness and social concern. As

⁹ Memorianus Amazihono, "Analysis of the Benefits of Free Lunch Program Policy for Students and Government," 23.

¹⁰ Wahyu Trisno Aji, "Free Nutritious Eating in the Prabowo-Gibran Era: A Solution for the People or a New Burden?," *NAAFI: STUDENT SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL* 2, no. 2 (2025): 300–311.

conveyed by Mrs. Siti (45 years old), one of the beneficiaries, this program encourages residents to help one another and share information, so that it not only provides physical benefits in the form of food but also creates a strong sense of kinship and social solidarity. These findings reflect the spirit of *at-ta'awun* (mutual aid), which is an important pillar in maintaining community harmony.

However, some field informants reported that there are still obstacles to the program's implementation, especially in the distribution mechanisms, which are not yet fully transparent. According to Mr. Rahman, one of the village officers, there are still cases in which assistance is given to parties who are not entitled due to proximity factors or inaccuracies in recipient data. This situation shows the potential for injustice and abuse of authority that can undermine the program's main objectives. Therefore, strengthening the supervision mechanism based on *the principle of hisbah* is very important so that the implementation of the free nutritious meal program truly reflects the values of justice, responsibility, and the benefit of the ummah as mandated in *fiqh siyasah*.

In the long run, the sustainability of free nutritious eating programs depends on the effectiveness of their management. If an economic empowerment strategy does not accompany this policy, it is feared that the community will become passive and overly dependent on government assistance. Therefore, from the perspective of *fiqh siyasah*, it is essential to integrate this program with efforts to improve skills and employment.¹¹ In this way, the free nutritious eating policy is not only a short-term solution, but can also provide sustainable benefits to the Muslim community as a whole.

Community Response to Free Nutritious Meal Program

The community's response to the free nutritious meal program is quite diverse. Most support this policy because it is seen as reflecting the state's concern for its people, as exemplified by previous Islamic governments. However, some criticize the funding source for this program, especially if it relies on state budget funds raised through taxes. In *fiqh siyasah*, the management of public funds must meet the principle of justice and not burden the community excessively.¹² In addition, some people consider the free nutritious meal program a positive step toward reducing social disparities and improving welfare, especially for underprivileged groups.¹³ This is in accordance with the principle of *al-mas'uliyah al-ijtimaiyyah* (social responsibility) in Islam, which holds that the government and society share the obligation to ensure that no individual is neglected in the fulfillment of basic needs.

¹¹ Putri Ardelia Maharani, Alliya Riyani Namira, and Tsalsabillah Viony Chairunnisa, "The role of free lunch in Prabowo Gibran's campaign promise and its realization," *Journal Of Law And Social Society* 1, no. 1 (2024): 1–10.

¹² Anggun Aiza Yolanda, "FREE NUTRITIOUS FOOD BUDGET: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN STATE BUDGET MANAGEMENT," t.t.

¹³ Reny Andriyanty and Widyastutik Widyastutik, 'FREE NUTRITIOUS EATING POLICY (MBG): HOW IT AFFECTS FARMERS' WELFARE', *MINUTES OF AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY Formulation of Strategic Studies in the Field of Agriculture and Environment* 12, no. 2 (September 2025): 184–90, <https://doi.org/10.29244/jkebijakan.v12i2.66225>.

However, there are concerns that this program could be misused by those who do not really need it, thereby reducing its effectiveness for the main target groups.

In the discourse of *fiqh siyasah*, some scholars emphasized that such policies must be implemented with the principles of transparency and accountability. Umar bin Khattab's Baitul Mal distribution policy exemplifies the importance of ensuring aid is given to those genuinely in need, without any element of injustice or waste. Therefore, the beneficiary verification mechanism needs to be strengthened to ensure this policy is implemented equitably. Some people also highlight that the free nutritious eating policy should not only be consumptive, but can also be combined with economic empowerment programs. For example, the government can work with farmers and small entrepreneurs to supply foodstuffs in the program. This not only supports policy sustainability but also strengthens the ummah's economy by empowering the local food sector in accordance with *halal* and *thiyab* principles. As such, the community's response to this program depends on how the policy is designed and implemented to provide broad, sustainable benefits to the Muslim community.

Predictions and Implications of Future Policies

Based on the theoretical analysis and the data studied, the free nutritious eating policy has the potential to be a solution to overcoming nutrition problems and poverty among the Muslim community, provided it is appropriately managed. In the long term, this program can be improved by adding elements of empowerment, such as involving *halal* MSMEs or mosque communities in food provision, to broaden the benefits. In addition, the sustainability of the free nutritious meal program requires strategic planning to ensure it does not become merely a temporary populist policy.¹⁴ From the perspective of *fiqh siyasah*, public policy must have a strong foundation in the aspects of social justice and the benefit of the people. Therefore, the government needs to adopt a funding model that relies not only on the state budget and taxes, but also on Islamic social funds such as *zakat*, *waqf*, and *alms*. The use of productive *waqf* funds, for example, can be a sustainable funding alternative that does not burden the state financially.

On the other hand, this program can also be integrated with other policies that support food security and community-based economies. For example, in implementing the free nutritious food policy, the government can collaborate with *sharia* cooperatives or Islamic boarding schools that operate *halal* agricultural and livestock businesses.¹⁵ With this approach, the free nutritious meal program not only provides direct benefits to recipients but also fosters a more self-reliant and competitive economic ecosystem, in line with the principle of *ihsān* (continuous improvement) in Islam. From a regulatory perspective, the results of interviews with several key informants show that strict supervision is needed to ensure that the free nutritious eating policy runs in accordance with the principles of *fiqh siyasah* and avoids the abuse of authority. The Head of the Social Welfare Section of West Metro District, Mr. Ahmad Fauzi, emphasized that without a robust control system, this program could be abused by certain individuals, especially in the procurement of foodstuffs and the determination of beneficiaries. He suggested that the government implement a *sharia*-based audit system that

¹⁴ Anif Kiftiyah et al., 'Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Programs in the Perspective of Social Justice and Social-Political Dynamics', *Pancasila: Indonesian Journal* 5, no. 1 (April 2025): 101–12, <https://doi.org/10.52738/pjk.v5i1.726>.

¹⁵ Abdul Rasyid, "Seriously Free Lunch," *Public Pulpit Newspaper*, 2024, 1–11.

not only checks finances but also ensures that each stage of food distribution complies with *halal* and *thayyib* principles.

Meanwhile, one of the teachers at SDN 3, Mrs. Nurhayati, revealed that there is sometimes a difference in food quality between schools, which leads to complaints from students' parents. According to him, this difference could be caused by weak supervision and a lack of transparency from catering service providers. He added that if the government wants this program to be successful and trusted by the public, there must be an open public reporting mechanism, for example, through periodic audits involving community members and religious institutions.

A similar view was also conveyed by Ustaz H. Zainal Arifin, a local religious leader, who emphasized that transparency and accountability are part of the value of *trust* that is highly emphasized in Islam. According to him, implementing a sharia-based audit system is not only a technical-administrative matter but also a moral responsibility before Allah SWT. With the strengthening of transparent and fair governance, public trust in the government will increase, and the free nutritious meal program can truly become an instrument of benefit aligned with the goals of *maqāṣid al-ṣyār'ah*.

Thus, future predictions indicate that free, nutritious meal programs can be an effective instrument for improving the well-being of Muslim communities when managed with a holistic, sustainable approach. This policy should not only be seen as a form of social assistance but also as an opportunity to strengthen the ummah's economy, reduce social inequality, and reinforce Islamic values in governance.

Challenges and Solutions in Policy Implementation

While the free nutritious meal policy has many benefits, it also poses some challenges in its implementation. One of the main challenges is budget constraints and funding sustainability, especially if these policies rely entirely on the state budget. In addition, another challenge is the distribution aspect, which must ensure that food reaches beneficiaries evenly and fairly. In some cases, potential misuse or inefficiencies in the management of public funds are also a concern.¹⁶

To overcome these challenges, the free nutritious meal policy can be combined with a more varied funding system, such as utilizing Islamic social funds, including zakat, infaq, alms, and productive waqf. In addition, involving the private sector and local communities, such as sharia cooperatives or halal micro-enterprises, in the provision of food can be a solution to improve program efficiency. In terms of supervision, the implementation of sharia-based audits and digital monitoring systems can help ensure transparency and accountability in this policy. With an integrated approach, challenges in policy implementation can be minimized, enabling free, nutritious meal programs to run effectively and sustainably.

Table 1: The Impact of Free Nutritious Meal Programs on the Muslim Community

¹⁶ Muhamad Iqbal Fathurahman, "FRAMING ANALYSIS OF TOLERANCE ISSUES IN THE DOCUMENTARY VIDEO 'KAREEM-MENU SIANG' BY WATCHDOC PRODUCTION HOUSE" (Falkutas Dakwah and Communication, t.t.).

Yes	Aspects	Findings	Description
1	Economics	Reduction of household cost burden	Families can allocate budgets for education and health
2	Social	Increasing community solidarity	This program helps reduce social disparities between citizens
3	Religion	In line with Islamic values	In accordance with the concept of <i>hifz an-nafs</i> and the principle of justice in <i>fiqh siyasah</i>
4	Challenge	Potential dependency	People can become overly dependent on government assistance
5	Solution	Community-based empowerment	Involving halal MSMEs and mosques in food preparation

Source: Author's Interpretation

The table above presents research findings on the impact and dynamics of implementing the free nutritious meal program from the perspective of *fiqh siyasah*. Each aspect presents a distinct yet interrelated dimension in developing a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of these policies.¹⁷ From an economic perspective, this program has been proven to ease the financial burden on households, predominantly low-income households. Many beneficiary families stated that with free nutritious meals, they could divert part of their household budget to other more productive needs, such as children's education and health services. This shows that this policy directly improves the welfare of the microeconomy.

Socially, this program also strengthens solidarity and a sense of togetherness among the community.¹⁸ People are becoming more concerned about the condition of their fellow citizens, especially those who are less fortunate. In the Islamic social context, this reflects the spirit of *at-ta'awun* (mutual aid) and helps narrow the social gap between citizens, thereby fostering better social harmony. From a religious perspective, this policy is considered to be in line with Islamic values, especially the principles of *hifz an-nafs* (safeguarding the soul) and social justice, which are the core of the teachings of *fiqh siyasah*. Providing access to nutritious food to the community is not only a social action but also part of implementing the value of benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) in Islamic governance.

¹⁷ Chalila Putri Komara et al., 'Free Nutritious Eating Program In The Midst Of The Food Waste Crisis', *Electronic Journal of Social and Political Sciences (E-SOSPOL)* 12, no. 2 (August 2025): 379–91, <https://doi.org/10.19184/e-sospol.v12i2.53789>.

¹⁸ Ajeng Atikah Merlinda and Yusmar Yusuf, 'Analysis of Prabowo Subianto's Free Meal Program on the Strategy of Increasing Student Learning Motivation in Schools Reviewed from the Perspective of Educational Sociology', *Research Domain : Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development* 7, no. 2 (January 2025): 1364–73, <https://doi.org/10.38035/rrj.v7i2.1360>.

However, some challenges need to be anticipated, namely the potential emergence of public dependence on government assistance. If not managed properly, this program can reduce people's motivation to be independent and work hard, potentially weakening the local economy's competitiveness. To address these challenges, a solution based on community-based empowerment is needed. The government can involve *halal MSME* actors, zakat institutions, and mosques in providing food, so that, in addition to meeting nutritional needs, this program also empowers people's economies. Thus, free nutritious meals are not only an aid policy but also a means of sustainable socio-economic development, in accordance with the principles of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, the free nutritious eating policy, from the perspective of *fiqh siyasah*, can be seen as the state's effort to realize community welfare. This program is in line with the principles of justice and welfare taught in Islam, as mentioned in the *maqāṣid asy-syarī'ah*, especially in the aspects of protecting the soul (*hifẓ an-nafs*) and property (*hifẓ al-māl*). However, for this policy to truly deliver optimal benefits, a governance system that is transparent, accountable, and in accordance with Sharia principles is needed. From an economic perspective, the free nutritious meal program has a positive impact on low-income individuals by reducing household expenses. This allows families to allocate their budgets to other sectors such as education and health. In addition, this program also has the potential to encourage local economic growth, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the food sector. However, if not appropriately managed, there is a risk of community dependence on government assistance, which can weaken the spirit of hard work and independence. From the social side, this policy can strengthen solidarity between citizens and reduce social inequality. The concept of *at-ta'āwun* (mutual help) in Islam emphasizes the importance of social care and equitable distribution of welfare in society. However, potential inequities in food distribution remain a challenge, especially in the absence of a strict beneficiary verification mechanism. Therefore, periodic supervision and evaluation are needed to ensure this program actually achieves the intended targets.

The community's response to the free nutritious meal program is quite diverse. Most support this policy because it reflects the state's role in the welfare of the people. However, there are also concerns about the funding source, particularly if it relies too heavily on tax funds. From the perspective of *fiqh siyasah*, the management of public funds must consider the principles of justice and balance to avoid disproportionately burdening one group of people. Alternative funding, such as zakat, waqf, and alms, can help ensure the sustainability of this program without overloading the state budget. In the long term, this policy requires a more comprehensive strategy that is not only consumptive but also contributes to the economic empowerment of the community. One approach is to involve *halal MSMEs*, sharia cooperatives, and mosque communities in providing food. In this way, the free nutritious meal program not only provides direct benefits to recipients but also strengthens the *ummah's* overall economy. From a regulatory perspective, these policies should have a strict oversight system in place to prevent potential abuse and ensure their effectiveness. The government can

implement sharia-based audits to ensure that the entire food supply chain in this program complies with halal and thayyib standards. In addition, transparency in the management of public funds is also a key factor in maintaining public trust in this policy.

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Authors Contribution

This research is the result of teamwork, with each author making a significant contribution to its preparation and completion. ABP is responsible for formulating research ideas, collecting data, and analyzing them from the perspective of fiqh siyasah. In addition, ABP also plays a role in compiling the introduction and conclusion sections to provide a comprehensive overview of this research.

GS and IAU contributed to the research methodology, especially by conducting literature reviews and by reviewing a wide range of literature relevant to the topics discussed. In addition, GS compiled the results and discussion sections and ensured that the data used in this study complied with applicable academic principles. GS also edited and revised the manuscript to conform to scientific writing standards. VA plays a role in preparing the theoretical foundation and the data processing used in this study. In addition, the VA compiled a section on the impact of the policy and the implications of the free nutritious meal program from the perspective of fiqh siyasah. The VA also assists with final editing and ensures that all parts of the research are systematically arranged and in accordance with the established rules of Arabic-Latin transliteration.

Conflict of Interest

The author states that there is no conflict of interest in the research and writing of this journal. All data and analysis are presented objectively without any influence from any party that may affect the results of the research.

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