

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES OF THE KAMPAR REGENCY GOVERNMENT IN OPTIMIZING THE TRANS-SUMATRA TOLL ROAD TO IMPROVE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the strategic initiatives undertaken by the Kampar Regency Government to optimize the utilization of the toll road to enhance the socio-economic welfare of the local community. Adopting a qualitative case study approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews with government officials, stakeholders, and local community members, as well as secondary data analysis. The findings reveal that the Kampar Regency Government has implemented various strategic policies, including collaborative planning with provincial and national agencies, engaging in public consultations, and prioritizing infrastructure integration with local economic activities. The toll road has brought significant socio-economic benefits, such as improved accessibility, increased economic activity, and enhanced opportunities for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring equitable benefit distribution, addressing negative impacts on certain MSMEs, and overcoming logistical and environmental issues. This study underscores the importance of inclusive policies and collaborative efforts to maximize infrastructure benefits for local communities. Recommendations are provided to enhance policy frameworks, empower local businesses, and support sustainable economic development in Kampar Regency. These findings contribute to academic discussions on regional development and transportation while offering practical insights for policymakers in optimizing infrastructure investments for community welfare.

Keyword: Infrastructure, Policy, Regional Development, Socio-Economic, Toll Road, Welfare.

INTRODUCTION

Development in a country significantly impacts the country's economic progress. Development can contribute to economic growth in a country by doing various things, such as infrastructure, improving the quality of human resources, and innovation. Infrastructure is one of the developments that play a major role in improving a country's economy. Good infrastructure can increase competitiveness and attract investors. It affects the economy (Arliman S, 2018). Modern infrastructure opens opportunities for developing new sectors (Lukito, 2017; Khairunnisa, 2021). In addition, infrastructure development carried out

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specifically in remote areas can help economic inequality between regions. Simply put, infrastructure development can be done by building public facilities related to accessibility (Auldri et al., 2024). Indonesia is one of the countries that continues to pursue major infrastructure projects, including the construction of toll roads, bridges, and airports. These projects aim to improve connectivity between regions and support economic growth. Infrastructure development in Indonesia has become a cornerstone of the national strategy to improve connectivity, reduce regional disparities, and support economic growth. Projects such as the Trans-Java Toll Road, the expansion of Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, and the construction of the Trans-Papua Road illustrate efforts to connect urban centres with remote and underdeveloped regions. These initiatives are critical to improving logistics, promoting social inclusion, and stimulating local economies through job creation. However, challenges such as budget constraints, limited space, and limited coordination among stakeholders remain significant issues (Tamba et al., 2024). Overcoming these hurdles is crucial to ensure equitable benefits from infrastructure investment and sustainable regional development (Sahoo & Dash, 2012; Manggat et al., 2018). The researcher analyzed the case study through a literature review of previous research. In Balikpapan City, improved accessibility is significantly correlated with increased economic growth, infrastructure development, and overall quality of life for residents (Fajri & Iqbal, 2023). To improve equitable access to the accessibility of regional public service facilities in disadvantaged areas, policy interventions are needed (Huang et al., 2024; Lubis & Sari, 2024). Research in Khulna, Bangladesh, showed significant inequalities in access due to spatial and infrastructure disparities, highlighting the need for improved health service distribution and transportation planning (Islam & Aktar, 2011). Similarly, Long's (2017) research explains the importance of evaluating spatial relationships between people and resources and highlights methodological considerations such as scale, data quality, and multimodal transportation network integration. A GIS-based method for evaluating the accessibility of social infrastructure facilities showed its effectiveness in identifying spatial disparities and helping optimize the placement of facilities for equitable access (Yhee et al., 2021). Infrastructure development significantly impacts sustainable rural livelihoods in Umzumbe Local Municipality, South Africa, with improved access to basic services and economic opportunities. However, challenges such as uneven distribution and maintenance hinder potential (Buthelezi et al., 2024). Urban transport development must focus on affordability, inclusiveness and quality of transport services, limiting their effectiveness in addressing urban mobility challenges (Brussel et al., 2019). Improved accessibility can affect population distribution and urban development (Jacobs-Crisioni et al., 2016). The short-term impact of infrastructure development from the Cipali toll road in West Java, Indonesia, on accessibility, trade and investment, highlighting how infrastructure development can stimulate local economic activity (Ardiyono et al., 2018). In Texas, the development of highway relief infrastructure had an impact on improving the economy of small communities there (Handy et al., 2002). After a discussion of Indonesia's infrastructure development in general, a detailed discussion of the Trans-Sumatra Toll Road provides insight into the regional impact of such projects. The Trans-Sumatra Toll Road, which stretches over 2,700 kilometres, is a

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flagship project that aims to improve connectivity across Sumatra, enhance economic integration between provinces, and accelerate regional development. The Trans-Sumatra Toll Road is a landmark infrastructure project that aims to transform Sumatra's economic landscape by significantly improving connectivity between provinces, reducing travel time and improving logistics efficiency. The toll road facilitates trade and investment by connecting key economic centres, encourages regional economic integration, and supports tourism growth in previously less accessible areas. The expressway is expected to facilitate smoother export access to Asia through integration with the Asian Expressway Network. In addition, the project is anticipated to generate substantial economic multiplier effects, potentially contributing 1.7 times or approximately IDR768 trillion to the economy of Sumatra, equivalent to 2.2% of the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). Regarding socio-economic indicators, Kampar's economy heavily depends on agriculture, mining and manufacturing. Despite the positive potential of JTTS to improve connectivity, the region has not experienced a significant poverty reduction, with a slight increase in poverty between 2022 and 2023 (Kamparkab.bps.go.id, 2024). Similarly, labour market indicators show a decline in the labour force participation rate (TPAK), although the open unemployment rate (TPT) has improved. The challenge for the local government as a whole, as stated in the strategic planning document, is to ensure that toll road development can provide tangible benefits to the community through increased participation in planning and collaboration with stakeholders (Thamrin et al., 2024). A clear model for JTTS development in Kampar needs to be revised to assess the need for further strategic planning to achieve the desired socio-economic outcomes. This research explores the Kampar Regency Government's strategic initiatives in optimizing the Trans-Sumatra Toll Road to improve the socio-economic welfare of the local community. The research seeks to identify the government's efforts to maximize the potential of the toll road, assess its socio-economic impacts, and evaluate the effectiveness of current policies in driving regional growth. The research will provide recommendations to improve toll road utilization, with benefits that include better policy development, community empowerment, infrastructure optimization, and contributions to the academic fields of regional development and transportation. Through this, this research is expected to support sustainable economic progress and improve the welfare of the people of Kampar Regency.

METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies implemented by the Kampar Regency government related to constructing the Trans-Sumatra Toll Road. The research design used is a case study focusing on specific programs the Kampar District Government implemented. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, such as government officials, Bappeda, MSME players, and the community. The purpose of these interviews was to gain deeper insight into the impact of government efforts in optimizing toll road development on the socioeconomic welfare of the community. Data sources consist of primary data obtained from interviews with informants and secondary data that includes previous research and supporting information from the

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Central Bureau of Statistics of Kampar Regency, such as poverty rates, GRDP, and others. With this approach, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive and clear picture of the effectiveness and challenges in overcoming flooding problems in urban areas (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldana, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Government Strategic Initiatives for Toll Road Development

Toll road development has an important role in improving transportation infrastructure and the economic growth of a region. Various government policies and programs have been formulated to support the development and expansion of toll roads. At the national level, the government prioritizes infrastructure development as part of a broader economic development agenda. This includes allocating funds, setting regulations, and providing incentives to encourage public and private sector participation in toll road projects. One of the key programs supporting toll road development is the National Strategic Projects (PSN) initiative, which lists toll roads as a priority. In addition, the government is also working to streamline the land acquisition process and offer various forms of financing to ensure timely completion and operational efficiency of toll roads. In Kampar Regency, the local government has been actively involved in initiating and supporting toll road development to improve connectivity, facilitate the movement of goods and people, and stimulate local economic growth. The Kampar District government has recognized the potential of toll roads in reducing travel time and increasing inter-regional trade, making them a local infrastructure development priority. This has involved planning and coordination with other relevant stakeholders, including the central and provincial governments, to ensure that the proposed toll road route strategically aligns with regional and national transportation goals. In addition, Kampar is also proactive in securing investment and addressing regional challenges that may arise, such as land availability and environmental issues, to create a conducive environment for toll road development. Local government agencies, such as the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), play an important role in the planning and implementation of toll road projects. Bappeda, as the agency responsible for regional development planning, ensures that toll road development is aligned with the broader development goals of the Kampar Regency. This includes conducting feasibility studies, engaging in public consultations, and coordinating with other local agencies to facilitate smooth project implementation. Bappeda also helps manage budget allocations for the project and ensures compliance with local regulations and national standards. In addition, Bappeda also works closely with other key players in the development process, such as the local infrastructure office, environment office, and land acquisition office, to overcome logistical challenges and ensure project success. Partnerships with the central and provincial governments are also important to optimize toll road development in Kampar Regency. The provincial government, particularly through agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning, provided critical support regarding expertise, funding, and regulatory oversight. Collaboration between local and provincial governments helps streamline the planning process, align the toll road route with the wider

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provincial transportation network, and ensure that infrastructure is well integrated into the local economy. In addition, national agencies such as the Ministry of Public Works and Housing and the Toll Road Regulatory Agency (BPJT) provide the legal framework, financial support, and technical support necessary to ensure that toll roads meet national standards for safety and efficiency. This partnership facilitates the optimization of toll road projects by leveraging the strengths and resources of different levels of government, ultimately benefiting residents and businesses in Kampar Regency through improved connectivity and economic opportunities.

Socio-economic Impact on Local Communities

The socio-economic impact of toll road development on local communities is substantial, especially regarding economic growth, job creation, and regional prosperity. One of the key benefits of toll road infrastructure is the potential for significant job creation in both the construction and operational phases. Toll road construction requires a wide range of skilled labour, from engineers and project managers to construction workers and administrative staff. In addition to direct employment, local service providers, including construction materials, transportation, and logistics providers, benefit from increased demand for their goods and services. This influx of employment opportunities can reduce unemployment rates in local communities and increase household income levels, contributing to overall economic well-being.

Economic Development

Toll road development can transform local businesses, especially micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and traders. Better infrastructure facilitates connectivity between urban and rural areas, making it easier for businesses to access markets, suppliers and consumers. For MSMEs, this can increase sales and market expansion, as goods can be transported more efficiently to regional and national markets. Traders also benefit from better transportation networks that lower logistics costs and reduce delivery times, making their products more competitive and increasing profitability. Local businesses involved in retail, hospitality, and services also experience growth as the toll road attracts more travellers, both for tourism and trade, thus driving demand for food, lodging, and other services. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the construction of the Pekanbaru-Bengkinang toll road has had positive and negative impacts on the socio-economic conditions of the community in Kampar Regency. On the positive side, there is an increase in the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) and a rapidly growing financial services and insurance sector, thanks to the increased use of digital payments. In addition, the construction of toll roads also accelerates accessibility and community mobility, which provides opportunities for MSMEs and the tourism sector to grow. However, on the other hand, this development has also led to a significant drop in revenue for several MSMEs, especially in areas that previously relied on vehicle traffic to bring in customers, such as food and souvenir vendors along the main roads. The decline in MSME incomes, particularly in villages directly affected by the toll road development, points to an imbalance in the

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distribution of benefits from this infrastructure development. While there are potential positives in the industrial and tourism sectors, more inclusive policies must be implemented to ensure that all levels of society, including MSME players, benefit equally. In this regard, attention to MSME income recovery and policy arrangements that support a more equitable economic distribution are important to create overall community welfare (Seran et al., 2024).

Improved Accessibility and Connectivity

Toll road construction brings significant benefits in improving accessibility and connectivity for both residents and businesses. One of the main advantages is the reduction in transportation time and cost. For residents, shorter travel times mean easier access to essential services such as education, health, and markets, thus improving their quality of life. For businesses, better transportation networks lower logistics costs, allowing goods to be transported more efficiently and at a lower cost. This efficiency can improve the competitiveness of local products and services in the wider market. In addition to cost and time savings, better accessibility encourages greater mobility for local and regional trade. Small-scale farmers and producers, for example, can reach larger markets faster, making their products fresher and more competitive. Businesses benefit from the expanded reach of their goods and services, allowing them to reach previously inaccessible areas and increase their customer base. Better connectivity also facilitates the movement of raw materials, helping industries maintain stable production and grow more sustainably. In addition, better accessibility can attract investment by making the region more attractive to potential investors and entrepreneurs. Better connectivity provides a foundation for economic development by connecting rural areas with urban centres, thus creating opportunities for new businesses and industries to flourish. The overall effect is increased economic activity, employment opportunities and regional integration, contributing to long-term growth and development.

Social Welfare

Toll road construction significantly impacts social welfare, particularly by improving access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and other community resources. For many residents, better transportation infrastructure means faster and more reliable access to health facilities, which can be especially important during emergencies and routine medical care. This improved accessibility helps reduce social disparities. This is explained in the following table

Tabel 1. Social Statistics of Kampar Regency 2022-2023

Deskripsi	Satuan	2022	2023
Population	Thousand	866,94	881,03
Population Growth Rate	%	2,17	1,55
Life Expectancy Rate	Year	71,12	71,42
Literacy Rate Age 15+	%	99,66	99,37
Labor Force Participation Rate	%	61,40	59,63
Open Unemployment Rate	%	3,62	3,38

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Poor Population	Thousand	63,55	63,38
Human Development Index	-	73,84	74,24

Source: kamparkab.bps.go.id, 2024

Based on the population data of Kampar Regency, there was an increase in population from 866.94 thousand in 2022 to 881.03 thousand in 2023, with a population growth rate of 1.55%. The improvement in the quality of public health is reflected in the life expectancy rate, which rose from 71.12 years to 72.42 years. However, the literacy rate for those aged 15 years and above declined slightly from 99.66% to 99.37%. The Labor Force Participation Rate (TPAK) also decreased from 61.40% in 2022 to 59.63% in 2023, although the open unemployment rate (TPT) decreased from 3.62% to 3.38%, indicating a decrease in job seekers. Unemployment is dominated by high school and university graduates, while the labour market more easily absorbs workers with lower education. On the other hand, the number of poor people increased slightly from 63.55 thousand to 63.84 thousand. Nevertheless, the Human Development Index (HDI) improved from 73.84 in 2022 to 74.24 in 2023, reflecting an overall improvement in the quality of life. Toll roads play an important role in raising living standards and improving social welfare for all by reducing social disparities and promoting community development.

Challenges and Obstacles in Optimizing Toll Roads

Based on research observations, the construction of the JTTS in Kampar Regency, Riau Province, has affected the community's land use patterns and impacted their socio-economic aspects. The toll road construction project has caused some residential land to be used as construction sites, so affected residents have to find new places to live. The increase in land demand due to toll road construction has also triggered the conversion of agricultural land into alternative routes or new settlement areas. As a result, agricultural productive land is significantly reduced, which indirectly impacts local communities' decline in agricultural yields. Other impacts also affect residential areas. Toll road construction also affects paddy fields, reducing productive land owned by the community. Although land conversion for public purposes is natural, the government needs to consider the impact on the social and economic conditions of the community in order to formulate appropriate policies. In addition, restaurant and souvenir traders along the Pekanbaru-Bangkinang crossing have experienced a significant decline in income. Many do not conduct promotions to attract customers, as they rely on buyers passing through the route without additional marketing strategies. In addition, researchers conducted interviews with informants, namely the local community: “Indeed, the toll road can facilitate access in and out of the market to sell agricultural products, but on the other hand we also face many problems because the toll road has resulted in the price of raw materials getting more expensive, we hope that there is a program from the government to focus on farmers affected by the construction of toll roads so that farmers can be more prosperous”. (Personal interview with the community on February 22, 2023). Thus, this research has answered the question posed. The construction of the Pekanbaru-Bangkinang JTTS has yet to significantly benefit the socio-economic life of the community. One reason is the need for more government support for businesses

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affected by the toll road construction. The government is expected to provide solutions for businesses, such as digital education, to help maintain their business or provide alternative jobs for affected communities after the toll road construction is completed. Overall, infrastructure development such as the JTTS must consider the socio-economic impacts and provide holistic solutions for affected communities. The Kampar District Government needs to take proactive steps by integrating development policies that are aligned with the local needs and potential of the community. This step is important to ensure that the benefits of development can be felt sustainably and equitably throughout the community.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluates the impact of the Pekanbaru-Bangkinang toll road development on the socio-economic community in Kampar Regency. Based on the analysis, the toll road construction has significant positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, this development accelerates accessibility and connectivity, increases local economic potential, creates jobs, and facilitates trade in goods and services, especially for MSMEs. Increased Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) and a growing financial services sector demonstrate the development benefits for the local economy. However, there are negative impacts, especially for MSMEs located along the old route, which experience a decline in income due to reduced vehicle traffic and changes in people's consumption patterns. In addition, toll road construction results in the conversion of productive land into construction areas, which results in reduced agricultural land and affects local agricultural output. Another challenge is inequality in the distribution of development benefits, with communities directly affected by the project requiring more attention from the government. The local government, in this case Kampar District, needs to implement more inclusive policies to ensure that the benefits of infrastructure development can be felt equally. This includes supporting MSMEs through digital education, skills training, and providing alternative employment for affected communities. Overall, toll road development must be accompanied by policies that pay attention to the social and economic needs of the community so that the benefits can be distributed fairly and sustainably.

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