



Complete Systematic Land Registration (PTSL) as an Asset Legalization Instrument: From Administrative Target Achievement to Substantive Equality of Land Access

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: PTSL, Asset Legalization, Policy Implementation, Substantive Equality, Land Legality.

Received : 17, July

Revised : 19, August

Accepted: 25, September

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ABSTRACT

This study examines whether the administrative success of the Complete Systematic Land Registration (PTSL) program produces substantively equal access to land legality. A qualitative descriptive study was conducted at the Pasuruan Regency Land Office using interviews, observation, and document analysis involving 15 purposively selected informants. Data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's model and Edwards III's framework of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The findings show that the 2025 target of 15,000 land parcels was fully realized, but access remained uneven because of low administrative literacy, intermediary dependence, varying local preparation costs, incomplete records, and unresolved inheritance disputes. The study proposes an implementation-capability gap to explain why strong output does not automatically produce substantive equality of land access

INTRODUCTION

Land is an economic asset, a social resource, and a legal object whose status affects household security and local economic activity. Formal registration provides documentary evidence of land rights and can strengthen legal certainty, reduce ambiguity concerning ownership and boundaries, and support legal protection when disputes arise (Dewi & Wisnaeni, 2023; Tiena Masriani Yulies, 2022)(Dewi & Wisnaeni, 2023; Yulies, 2022). For households whose land is inherited, informally transferred, or historically undocumented, however, the absence of formal registration can create a persistent gap between physical possession and legally recognized rights (Bwalya Umar et al., 2023)(Umar et al., 2023).

The Indonesian government addresses this problem through the Complete Systematic Land Registration (PTSL) program. PTSL is designed to accelerate systematic land registration and provide legal certainty and protection for land rights. It is therefore more than a technical land-administration program: it is also a public policy instrument for asset legalization because it transforms physical and juridical information into formally recognized rights. Its social-policy relevance lies in the possibility that legal recognition can reduce uncertainty and strengthen the position of households over assets that are economically and socially important (Gusti et al., 2024).

Previous studies show that PTSL implementation remains shaped by local administrative conditions. Research has identified incomplete land documents, boundary disputes, limited public understanding, resource constraints, coordination problems, and differences in implementation capacity across regions (Muhammad et al., 2022; Pahlawan et al., 2022; Ramadhanti et al., 2024; Rudianto & Heriyanto, 2022; Syamsi et al., 2024). Other studies emphasize the protective and economic significance of land certification (Cahyadhi & Nawangsari, 2022; Samosir & Moeis, 2023). These studies establish that implementation quality and legal certainty matter, but they leave a distributive question insufficiently explored: whether citizens with different administrative, financial, documentary, and social conditions possess comparable practical capabilities to obtain the benefits of PTSL.

This question becomes critical when program performance is judged through quantitative targets. A land office may achieve a 100% certification target while applicants experience very different levels of difficulty. One household may have complete documents and understand the administrative sequence, whereas another may depend on intermediaries, face an inheritance dispute, or struggle with local preparation expenses. Aggregate equality of output can therefore coexist with inequality in the process through which citizens obtain legally secure rights.

The present study treats this tension as its central analytical problem. George C. Edwards III's implementation framework is used to examine the government side through communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure (Edward III, 1980). Sen's capability approach is used to examine the citizen side by distinguishing formal opportunity from the substantive ability to convert an available public service into a valued outcome

(Sen, 1999)(Sen, 1999). Five access dimensions connect the two perspectives: information, administrative procedures, public services, financial requirements, and legal protection certainty.

Pasuruan Regency provides a useful case because the 2025 PTSL program achieved its target of 15,000 SHAT parcels with 15,000 K1 realizations, which serves as a starting point to examine the implementation mechanisms that enabled this achievement and the barriers remaining at the citizen level. The study examines how communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure shaped implementation, the factors supporting or constraining substantive access, and how implementation capacity interacted with citizen capability in determining PTSL's role as an asset legalization instrument. Its contribution is threefold: empirically, it provides a multi-actor account of PTSL implementation in Pasuruan Regency; theoretically, it connects Edwards III's organizational implementation variables with a capability-oriented understanding of substantive access; and conceptually, it proposes an implementation-capability gap, defined as the distance between an implementing organization's capacity to deliver a formally universal service and citizens' differentiated ability to convert that service into legally secure land rights, thereby allowing PTSL performance to be assessed beyond certificate counts and toward substantive equality of access.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

PTSL, Public Policy, and Asset Legalization

Public policy implementation concerns the translation of policy decisions into organizational action and observable outcomes (Anderson, 2015; Dunn, 2003). In land administration, PTSL combines regulatory requirements, technical measurement, juridical verification, document processing, inter-organizational coordination, and citizen-facing services. Its output the land title certificate has significance beyond administrative completion because it formalizes a legal claim and strengthens documentary protection over an asset.

The asset-legalization perspective requires attention to both certificate production and the conditions under which citizens reach certification. If information barriers, documentary requirements, or financial burdens systematically disadvantage some households, the legalizing function of the policy is only partially realized. Formal universality may therefore coexist with differentiated practical accessibility.

Edwards III and Implementation Capacity

Edwards III (1980) identifies communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure as interrelated determinants of implementation. Communication concerns transmission, clarity, and consistency. Resources include personnel, information, authority, budget, and equipment. Disposition concerns implementers' commitment, attitudes, and responsiveness. Bureaucratic structure concerns division of labor, standard operating procedures, and fragmentation.

In this study, these variables are treated as mechanisms that can shape the distribution of access. Communication affects whether citizens understand

requirements; resources affect the organization's ability to provide timely services; disposition affects the availability of assistance and the protection of legal standards; and bureaucratic structure affects whether citizens can interact directly with responsible officials or must rely on intermediaries.

Capability and Substantive Equality

Sen's (1999) capability approach distinguishes formal opportunities from the real freedoms people have to achieve valued outcomes. In PTSL, the existence of a registration opportunity represents a formal condition, while the substantive condition concerns whether applicants can understand requirements, assemble documents, interact with the bureaucracy, bear legitimate preparation costs, and resolve legal problems sufficiently to obtain a certificate. This study therefore distinguishes formal equality, in which citizens are offered the same program opportunities and subject to the same formal rules, from substantive equality, in which differences in administrative literacy, financial capacity, documentary history, and legal circumstances may systematically affect their ability to use those opportunities. This concept does not imply identical treatment but emphasizes the need for appropriate assistance when barriers are unevenly distributed.

Research Gap and Integrated Framework

Existing PTSL studies commonly emphasize implementation conditions, legal certainty, or technical and documentary barriers. These strands explain important parts of the problem but do not fully connect organizational performance with citizen-level capability. The present study addresses this gap by placing citizen capability inside the implementation analysis rather than treating it as an external background condition.

The proposed framework has two levels. Level one is implementation capacity, represented by Edwards III's four variables. Level two is substantive access, represented by information, administration, service, finance, and legal protection. The implementation-capability gap emerges when organizational implementation capacity is high but citizens' ability to convert the resulting service into legally secure rights remains differentiated.

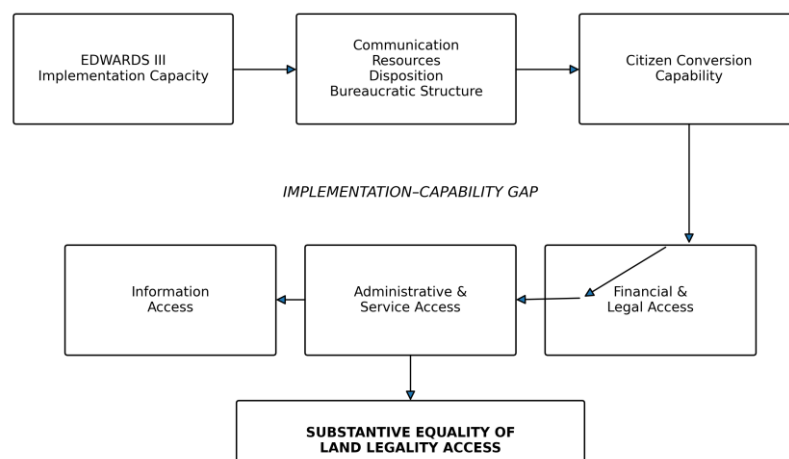


Figure 1. Integrated conceptual framework of PTSL implementation and substantive equality of land access.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design at the Pasuruan Regency Land Office, East Java, Indonesia. The design was selected because the research seeks to explain implementation processes and citizen experiences that cannot be adequately represented by certification totals alone.

Fifteen informants were purposively selected: two land office officials (an implementation officer and a juridical task force officer), one village government official, one local PTSL committee chairperson, and 11 community members with direct PTSL experience. The composition enables comparison between institutional perspectives and beneficiary experiences.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews and field observations. Secondary data included relevant regulations, Pasuruan Regency Land Office target and realization documents for fiscal years 2025–2026, and village Letter C records. Data analysis followed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Evidence was coded according to Edwards III's four implementation variables and the five access dimensions. Triangulation compared statements from implementers, village-level actors, and community members with observations and administrative records. The analysis followed a sequential logic: identify implementation capacity, identify enabling and constraining factors, map those factors onto substantive access dimensions, and determine whether evidence indicates a gap between formal program availability and practical capability.

The study is bounded by the qualitative evidence. Reported local preparation costs are interpreted as evidence of variation and governance risk rather than statistically representative estimates. The study also does not estimate causal effects of certification on income or household welfare.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Quantitative Performance and the Output–Access Divergence

The PTSL program in Pasuruan Regency in fiscal year 2025 covered 36 villages/kelurahan. Administrative documentation records a target of 15,000 SHAT parcels and 15,000 K1 realizations. Implementation was organized through five teams. For fiscal year 2026, the quota increased to 18,000 parcels while the five-team structure was maintained.

Table 1. Target and realization of PTSL in Pasuruan Regency, fiscal year 2025

Implementation Team	SHAT Target (Parcels)	K1 Realization (Parcels)	Realization
Team I	2,424	2,424	100%
Team II	3,296	3,296	100%
Team III	3,132	3,132	100%
Team IV	3,406	3,406	100%
Team V	2,742	2,742	100%
Total	15,000	15,000	100%

Source: Pasuruan Regency Land Office Recapitulation, 2026.

The 100% realization demonstrates substantial organizational capacity. However, the qualitative evidence indicates that output equality should not be treated as evidence of equal access. The central empirical pattern is a divergence between administrative output and citizen experience: the organization met the same quantitative target for the program as a whole, while applicants encountered different levels of informational, administrative, financial, and legal difficulty.

Communication: Effective Institutional Transmission, Uneven Citizen Understanding

Communication was supported by a hierarchical socialization chain from the Land Office to village heads, hamlet-level actors, and local PTSL committees. This arrangement facilitated dissemination of schedules, document requirements, and field activities and contributed to operational coordination.

The weakness emerged when formal policy information was translated into local practice. Community experiences indicated variation in understanding concerning financial obligations and preparation activities. Reported local preparation costs ranged from IDR 200,000 to IDR 2,000,000 for boundary stakes, affidavits, stamps, and related preparation. These figures represent reported local experiences and are not treated as official PTSL fees.

The finding reveals a two-stage communication problem. Policy information can be successfully transmitted to implementing actors without becoming equally clear to beneficiaries. When applicants depend on intermediaries, information passes through an additional interpretive layer. Communication should therefore be evaluated at both institutional transmission and beneficiary comprehension.

Resources: Strong Organizational Capacity but Uneven Citizen Conversion

The resource dimension was comparatively strong. Five operational teams, physical and juridical task forces, the Computerized Land Activities (KKP) system, Letter C records, block maps, and satellite or drone imagery supported large-scale implementation. These resources improved the organization's capacity to process physical and juridical data and contributed to target achievement.

Yet organizational resources did not eliminate citizen-level barriers. Technology can improve measurement and database management, but it cannot by itself reconstruct missing inheritance evidence, settle family disputes, or teach applicants how to navigate administrative procedures. The result is a resource-conversion problem: the state possesses strong implementation resources while citizens possess unequal resources for using the resulting service.

Disposition: Strong Commitment with a Need for Institutionalized Assistance

Implementers demonstrated a supportive disposition through administrative assistance and commitment to clear-and-clean legal standards. Where inheritance or ownership disputes remained unresolved, officers did not simply accelerate certification to meet output targets. This indicates that positive disposition protected the legal integrity of certification.

However, reliance on individual officer responsiveness can create uneven service experiences. If assistance depends mainly on informal interaction with

particular officers, service quality may vary across applicants. Supportive practices should therefore be institutionalized through standardized checklists, assistance desks, written explanations of deficiencies, and formal escalation channels.

Bureaucratic Structure: Functional Division with an Intermediary Risk

The division of responsibilities among the Land Office, physical and juridical task forces, village government, and local committees supported operational efficiency. Specialization was necessary because PTSL requires field measurement, juridical verification, document processing, and coordination.

At the same time, intermediary dependence created potential information asymmetry. Village and committee actors can make a complex program more accessible by translating requirements into local terms. However, when citizens depend almost entirely on intermediaries, differences in interpretation or local practices may become difficult for beneficiaries to detect or challenge. Bureaucratic structure should therefore be evaluated not only by internal efficiency but also by the transparency of the citizen interface.

Documentary, Inheritance, and Physical-Juridical Barriers

The most consequential substantive barriers involved land histories that did not fit neatly into current documentary requirements. The study identified unresolved inheritance disputes, boundary disagreements among heirs, verbal land transactions without written receipts, and discrepancies between physical measurements and juridical records.

These barriers determine whether a parcel can progress through registration without creating a new legal dispute. They also show why high organizational output does not eliminate case-level complexity. Straightforward parcels can move through routine processing, whereas complex parcels require differentiated pathways for document reconstruction, mediation, or legal clarification.

Administrative Literacy and Intermediary Dependence

Low administrative literacy emerged as a cross-cutting barrier. Applicants who did not fully understand the sequence of requirements tended to rely more heavily on village-level actors or intermediaries. Dependence is not inherently negative because intermediaries can reduce complexity. The problem arises when they become the primary source of information, because applicants may lose direct visibility over application status, missing documents, expected timelines, and cost responsibilities.

Administrative literacy should therefore be treated as a substantive access variable. If the policy assumes that applicants can independently interpret complex procedures, formal universality can produce unequal practical outcomes. Direct information and applicant tracking are consequently mechanisms for reducing unequal conversion of the policy opportunity.

Financial Burden and the Distribution of Administrative Costs

The reported variation in local preparation costs is significant because the same nominal expense can have different consequences across households. A cost manageable for one household may become a barrier for another with

limited disposable income. The issue is therefore distributive: who bears the transaction costs associated with converting eligibility into certification?

The study does not classify all reported local preparation costs as improper charges. Instead, the evidence points to a governance risk created by insufficiently visible boundaries between centrally funded registration activities and locally organized preparation. Applicants should receive a clear distinction between official program costs, legitimate preparation requirements, and charges that are not authorized.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Table 2. Supporting and inhibiting factors in PTSL implementation.

Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
Active community participation in document submission.	Unresolved family inheritance disputes and boundary disagreements among heirs.
Structured five-team division with physical and juridical functions.	Untidy historical land transaction records, including verbal transactions without written evidence.
Coordination among the Land Office, village governments, and local committees.	Discrepancies between physical measurements and juridical records.
Baseline data and IT tools, including Letter C, block maps, KKP, and drone imagery.	Low administrative literacy and heavy reliance on intermediaries.
Supportive implementer disposition and administrative assistance.	Variation in reported local preparation costs that may burden lower-income households.

Synthesis of the Implementation–Capability Gap

The evidence can be synthesized through the implementation-capability gap. At the implementation level, the program demonstrated high capacity: the target was achieved, teams were structured, technological resources were available, coordination functioned, and implementers maintained legal standards. At the citizen level, however, the capability to convert the program into a certificate varied with administrative literacy, documentary completeness, financial capacity, and the complexity of ownership history.

Table 3. Relationship Between Formal PTSL Access And Substantive Capability.

Access Dimension	Formal Program Condition	Observed Constraint	Equity Implication
Information	Program information transmitted through	Applicants may rely on intermediaries and have uneven understanding of	Formal availability does not ensure equal comprehension.

	institutional and village channels.	requirements and costs.	
Administration	Structured teams and procedures support registration.	Incomplete documents and complex land histories increase burden for some applicants.	Administrative burden is differentiated.
Public service	Officials provide coordination and assistance.	Access may depend on particular actors or intermediaries.	Assistance should be institutionalized.
Finance	Core program activities are publicly funded.	Reported local preparation costs vary across experiences.	Incidental costs may have regressive effects.
Legal protection	Clear-and-clean verification protects disputed rights.	Inheritance and boundary disputes can delay certification.	Legal integrity requires differentiated case handling.

DISCUSSION

PTSL Success: From Output Performance to Access Performance

The findings do not diminish the importance of quantitative target achievement. The realization of 15,000 K1 parcels against a target of 15,000 demonstrates substantial administrative capacity. The analytical problem arises only when output achievement is treated as a sufficient indicator of policy success. The qualitative evidence shows that equal aggregate output can conceal unequal burdens at the citizen level.

Edwards III helps explain how the implementing system produced a strong output. Communication mobilized local actors, resources supported technical processing, disposition protected legal standards, and bureaucratic structure coordinated specialized tasks. The capability perspective adds the missing citizen-side question: whether applicants possess the practical means to convert the service into a legally secure outcome. The two perspectives are therefore complementary rather than competing.

Communication as an Equity Mechanism

Communication is often treated as successful when information has been transmitted to implementing actors. The Pasuruan case suggests a more demanding standard. For a citizen-facing policy, communication is effective only when beneficiaries can understand what they must do, what they may expect, what costs are legitimate, and how they can challenge or verify administrative decisions.

The reported variation in local preparation costs illustrates this point. The problem is not simply the existence of costs; it is the possibility that unclear

communication allows the policy to be interpreted differently at different local interfaces. This creates unequal information conditions and can increase dependence on intermediaries. Direct communication should therefore be understood as part of the policy's equity architecture.

Resources Do Not Automatically Equalize Capability

The strong use of KKP, maps, and drone imagery demonstrates technological and organizational modernization. Yet the findings show that modernization of the bureaucracy and modernization of citizen access are not identical processes. A highly capable information system can coexist with a citizen who does not know whether a document is missing or why a case has stopped.

This distinction has a broader theoretical implication. Public-service resources produce equal outcomes only when citizens possess sufficient conversion capacity to use them. Where conversion capacity differs, additional administrative resources may improve aggregate productivity without proportionally improving the position of the most constrained applicants.

Disposition and the Institutionalization of Fair Assistance

The positive disposition of officers is a critical strength because legal integrity cannot be reduced to speed. Refusing to certify disputed parcels protects the legal purpose of PTSL even when it may reduce short-term output. However, discretionary assistance also creates a potential institutional weakness if access depends on individual helpfulness.

An equitable implementation system should convert good individual practices into predictable institutional services. Written deficiency notices, standardized checklists, assistance desks, and complaint channels can reduce dependence on personal discretion while preserving the positive disposition observed in the field.

Bureaucratic Structure and the Intermediary Effect

The five-team structure demonstrates functional specialization, but the presence of village-level committees and intermediaries creates a second governance dimension: who controls access to information at the local interface? Intermediaries can reduce administrative complexity, yet they can also create information asymmetry when citizens cannot independently verify what has been communicated on their behalf.

This suggests that bureaucratic structure should be evaluated through both internal and external criteria. Internally, task division and coordination support efficiency. Externally, transparency, direct communication, and traceability determine whether citizens can navigate the structure without excessive dependence on gatekeepers.

Documentary Complexity as a Distributional Problem

Inheritance disputes, verbal transactions, and physical-juridical discrepancies are often presented as technical obstacles. The present study interprets them as distributional problems because documentary complexity is not evenly distributed across households. Families with long, well-documented ownership histories face a different administrative burden from families whose land was transferred informally or inherited without complete documentation.

This means that a universal procedure can produce differentiated costs. Treating all cases identically may appear administratively neutral but can be substantively unequal. A differentiated case-management approach is therefore consistent with substantive equality: routine cases should remain efficient, while complex cases should receive appropriate administrative and legal assistance.

Financial Burden and the Risk of Regressive Access

The reported variation in local preparation costs provides another mechanism through which formal access can become unequal. The relevant issue is not whether a particular cost is large in absolute terms but whether the burden is proportionally greater for households with limited economic resources. This is why cost transparency is an equity issue rather than merely an accounting issue.

An applicant should not have to infer financial obligations through informal channels. A standardized cost information sheet and receipt system can reduce uncertainty, strengthen accountability, and allow applicants to distinguish official program costs from local preparation activities.

Theoretical Contribution: The Implementation-Capability Gap

The central theoretical contribution is the implementation-capability gap. Edwards III explains the capacity of the implementing organization, while the capability approach explains the capacity of citizens to convert a public service into a valued outcome. The gap becomes visible when implementation capacity is high but conversion capability is uneven.

This formulation extends conventional implementation evaluation in two ways. First, it treats citizen capability as part of the implementation process rather than as an external social characteristic. Second, it shifts the endpoint of policy evaluation from organizational output to the practical realization of the policy's intended benefit. For PTSL, the intended benefit is not merely the production of certificates but the achievement of legally secure and reasonably accessible land rights.

Implications for the Social-Inequality Argument

The study deliberately avoids claiming that PTSL has directly reduced overall social inequality because the research does not measure changes in household income, wealth, or welfare over time. The empirically defensible claim is narrower: PTSL has the potential to reduce inequality in access to legally recognized land rights, but this potential is constrained when informational, administrative, financial, and legal burdens are unevenly distributed.

This distinction strengthens the argument. It links PTSL to inequality through a measurable policy mechanism—access to land legality—rather than through an unsupported claim about macro-level welfare effects. Future longitudinal research can then test whether more equal access to certification translates into economic and social outcomes.

Comparison with Previous Research

Table 4. Position of the present study in relation to previous research.

Research Emphasis	Contribution of Previous Studies	Remaining Gap	Present Study's Extension
PTSL implementation	Explains communication, resources, coordination, and local implementation conditions.	Limited integration with citizen capability.	Links implementation variables to substantive access.
Legal certainty and land rights	Shows the importance of certification and legal protection.	Less attention to administrative conversion barriers.	Connects legal outcomes with implementation processes.
Documentary and technical barriers	Identifies incomplete evidence, boundaries, and physical-juridical discrepancies.	Often treated as isolated technical problems.	Interprets documentary complexity as a differentiated access burden.
Present study	Integrates organizational capacity and citizen capability.	Single-regency qualitative case.	Proposes the implementation-capability gap.

Policy Implications

First, communication should be redesigned as a direct citizen service. Applicants should receive a standardized information sheet explaining requirements, application stages, official costs, legitimate local preparation activities, timelines, responsible officers, and complaint channels.

Second, complex cases should receive differentiated administrative assistance. Parcels can be categorized into routine, documentary-deficient, inheritance-disputed, and boundary-disputed cases so that administrative resources are directed according to the nature of the barrier.

Third, financial transparency should be strengthened at the village interface through standardized receipts, public information boards, documented preparation requirements, and complaint mechanisms.

Fourth, applicant tracking should reduce intermediary dependence. Applicants should be able to verify document receipt, physical measurement status, juridical verification, outstanding requirements, and the responsible service point.

Fifth, PTSL evaluation should add equity-sensitive indicators, including direct-information coverage, frequency and duration of incomplete-document

cases, resolution time for inheritance and boundary disputes, reported variation in local preparation costs, and accessibility of complaint mechanisms.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PTSL implementation in Pasuruan Regency demonstrates a clear contrast between strong administrative output and incomplete substantive equality of access. The fiscal-year 2025 program achieved 15,000 K1 realizations against a target of 15,000 parcels, supported by structured teams, technological resources, inter-agency coordination, and positive implementer disposition.

However, citizens did not encounter identical conditions in converting the program opportunity into legally secure rights. Administrative illiteracy, intermediary dependence, reported variation in local preparation costs, incomplete historical documentation, physical-juridical discrepancies, and unresolved inheritance disputes created differentiated burdens. The policy was therefore operationally effective but distributively incomplete.

The main contribution is the implementation-capability gap: a distinction between the capacity of the implementing organization to produce formal outputs and the differentiated capability of citizens to convert those outputs into substantive legal access. The concept connects Edwards III's implementation capacity with Sen's capability perspective and provides a clearer basis for evaluating asset-legalization policies.

Policy implementation should consequently move beyond certificate counts toward a dual performance standard combining output effectiveness and substantive accessibility. Direct citizen information, institutionalized administrative assistance, transparent local financial governance, applicant tracking, and equity-sensitive indicators are recommended as immediate mechanisms for narrowing the gap between formal entitlement and practical access.

FURTHER STUDY

The study is limited geographically to Pasuruan Regency and is based on qualitative evidence from 15 informants. It does not estimate the prevalence of each barrier among all applicants and does not establish causal effects of certification on household welfare. Reported local cost ranges should therefore not be interpreted as official or universal PTSL tariffs.

Future studies should test the implementation-capability gap across multiple districts using mixed methods. Quantitative research could examine whether administrative literacy, household economic capacity, inheritance status, or distance from service points predict registration completion time and administrative burden. Longitudinal studies could assess post-certification effects on formal credit access, productive investment, land-use security, and household welfare. Comparative research could also evaluate whether digitalization reduces or merely relocates administrative inequality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors express their gratitude to the Pasuruan Regency Land Office, participating village government officials, local PTSL committees, and community informants for their cooperation and valuable insights. Appreciation is also extended to Universitas Yudharta Pasuruan for academic and institutional support.

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