

Analysis Of Socio-Economic Changes On The Welfare Of Corn Farmers In The Donggo Community

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Abstract

The socio-economic changes occurring in the agricultural sector have a significant impact on the welfare of farmers. These changes include shifts in production patterns, fluctuations in agricultural prices, rising production costs, and changes in the social structure of rural communities. This situation requires farmers to adapt in order to sustain their livelihoods and improve their family's welfare. This study aims to analyze socio-economic changes and their impact on farmers' welfare. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that socio-economic changes have a dual impact on farmers' welfare. On one hand, innovations and modernization in agriculture have the potential to increase productivity, but on the other hand, limited access to capital, technology, and markets prevents farmers' welfare from improving optimally. Therefore, active involvement of the government and relevant institutions is needed to support farmers' empowerment through favorable policies, strengthening farmers' institutions, and increasing access to production resources to achieve sustainable farmers' welfare

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1. INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector is one of the strategic sectors that plays an important role in the national economy, particularly as a food provider, a source of income, and a means of labor absorption in rural areas. Most rural communities in Indonesia still rely on the agricultural sector for their livelihood, especially as small farmers who are highly dependent on natural conditions, market dynamics, and government policies.

In its development, farming communities face various social and economic changes that are quite significant. These changes include a shift in production patterns from traditional systems to more modern systems, changes in the social structure of village communities, increasing agricultural production costs, and fluctuations in agricultural product prices in the market. In addition, globalization and technological developments also influence the mindset, behavior, and survival strategies of farmers in managing their farming businesses (Rahma et al., 2025).

These socio-economic changes do not always have a positive impact on farmers' lives. On one hand, agricultural modernization and technological advancements have the potential to increase productivity and farming efficiency. However, on the other hand, farmers' limited access to capital, technology, market information, as well as their weak bargaining position often prevent them from fully benefiting from these changes. This situation affects low income, economic instability in farm households, and a decline in the level of welfare.

The welfare of farmers is not only measured by income levels but also encompasses other aspects such as the fulfillment of basic needs, access to education and healthcare services, housing

conditions, and family food security. Socio-economic changes that are not accompanied by appropriate policies and empowerment programs have the potential to widen social disparities and reinforce structural poverty among farmers. Therefore, the agricultural sector remains a primary pillar of the rural economy in Indonesia, particularly in agrarian areas such as Donggo District. One of the main commodities widely cultivated by the local community is corn, which plays an important role both as a source of household income for farmers and as a support for local food security. Most of the Donggo community rely on corn farming for their livelihood, so the social and economic conditions of farmers greatly determine the overall welfare of the community (Irahmayasari et al., 2021).

Along with the times, the corn farming community in Donggo District has experienced various socio-economic changes. These changes include a shift in production patterns from traditional to semi-modern, the use of superior seeds and chemical fertilizers, increased market involvement, as well as government policy support through agricultural programs and rural infrastructure development. On the other hand, social changes are also evident in work relationships, the division of roles within farming families, and reduced interest among the younger generation in working in the agricultural sector.

These socio-economic changes have brought diverse impacts on the lives of corn farmers. On one hand, agricultural modernization and wider market access have the potential to increase farmers' productivity and income. However, on the other hand, rising production costs, dependence on capital and agricultural inputs, as well as fluctuations in corn prices in the market often lead to income instability. This situation means that farmers' welfare does not always align with the increase in production yields they achieve (Riyadi1 et al., 2025).

In addition to economic aspects, the welfare of corn farmers is also related to social aspects, such as the ability to meet the basic needs of the family, access to education and healthcare services, housing conditions, as well as a sense of security and sustainability of livelihood. The disparity in welfare between farmers with large capital and small farmers is beginning to be visible, so the socio-economic changes that occur have the potential to widen social gaps at the local level.

Based on these conditions, a comprehensive study is needed to analyze how socio-economic changes occurring in the Donggo District affect the welfare levels of corn farmers. This analysis is important not only to understand the socio-economic reality of the farmers but also as a basis for formulating more targeted policies and empowerment strategies to sustainably improve the welfare of corn farmers.

2. METHOD

This research uses a mixed methods approach by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The research location is in Donggo District, with the research subjects being corn farmers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Qualitative data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, while quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to assess the level of farmers' welfare. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking (Saksitha et al., 2024).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social and Economic Changes of Corn Farmers in Donggo District

Donggo District is a rural area where most of the population relies on agriculture, particularly corn farming, as their livelihood. Corn serves not only as an economic commodity but also as a part of the local food system and culture. Over time, corn farmers in Donggo District have experienced various social and economic changes that affect their lifestyle and level of welfare.

a) Social Change

From a social perspective, there has been a change in work patterns within farming families. Family members, including women, are increasingly involved in agricultural and

post-harvest activities. In addition, there is a growing tendency for young generations to be interested in working as corn farmers, resulting in agricultural labor being increasingly dominated by middle-aged and young groups.

The social changes among corn farmers in Donggo District can be seen from the following aspects: 1) Changes in farmers' work and production patterns, from previously relying on traditional methods to starting to use superior seeds, chemical fertilizers, and simple farming tools. 2) Changes in social relations patterns with the daily wage system. 3) Changes in corn farmers' mindset, beginning to view farming as an economic activity that should generate profit, not just to meet household consumption needs. However, this change in mindset is not yet fully accompanied by adequate managerial skills and access to information.

The socioeconomic changes among corn farmers in Donggo District show a complex dynamic. Agricultural modernization and social pattern changes have not fully been able to improve farmers' welfare because they still face limitations in capital, technology, and market access. Therefore, a sustainable farmer empowerment strategy is needed through institutional strengthening, capacity building for farmers, and agricultural policies that favor corn farmers (Rahmayani et al., n.d.).

b) Economic Changes

Economic changes among corn farmers in Donggo District occur alongside market price dynamics, agricultural policies, as well as changes in the patterns of production and distribution of agricultural products. Corn, as a primary commodity, plays an important role in supporting farmers' household income; however, in practice, farmers still face various economic challenges. From an economic perspective, findings indicate that (1) The changes in corn farmers' incomes in Donggo District tend to be unstable and are highly dependent on the harvest results and corn prices in the market. Price fluctuations during the peak harvest often cause the selling price of corn to drop, making farmers' income not proportional to the production costs incurred. This situation makes it difficult for farmers to improve their living standards and save for long-term needs. (2) Increase in production costs in recent years, corn farmers in Donggo District have experienced rising production costs, especially for fertilizers and pesticides, the purchase of superior seeds, and labor costs, which have become increasingly high. (3) Dependence on external capital, farmers still rely on capital from bank loans or capital owners to finance the production process. This dependence affects the farmers' profits and losses if selling prices are unstable. These production cost factors are not always matched by increases in corn selling prices, so the profits earned by farmers are relatively small, especially for farmers with limited land area.

Based on research results, it shows that corn farmers in Donggo District have experienced significant socio-economic changes in recent years. These changes are evident in farming production patterns, income structures, and the social dynamics of the farming community. Economically, most farmers have shifted from traditional farming systems to semi-modern systems by using superior seeds, chemical fertilizers, and simple farming tools. This change has resulted in an increase in corn production per planting season. However, this production increase is accompanied by higher production costs, especially for purchasing fertilizers, pesticides, and labor costs (Fuad Badawi, Sri Yuli Astuti, 2024).

Corn Farmers' Welfare Condition

The welfare of corn farmers in the Donggo community is currently still relatively vulnerable and uneven. Corn, as the main commodity, is indeed the primary source of household income for farmers, but the earnings obtained are not yet fully sufficient to meet living needs sustainably. Corn farmers' income in the Donggo community is seasonal and highly dependent on the harvest yield and corn prices in the market. During a good harvest season, farmers' incomes can cover daily needs, but when corn prices drop or there is a crop failure, farmers' income decreases drastically. This situation leads to economic instability for farming households and limited ability to save (Setyawanto et al., 2025).

Based on the analysis results, the welfare level of corn farmers in Donggo District is in the fair category, but it is not yet evenly distributed. Farmers who have larger land areas and sufficient capital tend to have more stable incomes compared to small-scale farmers. The income of corn farmers has increased nominally, especially during the harvest season when selling prices are relatively good. However, fluctuations in corn prices cause farmers' income to be unstable from one season to the next. This condition affects farmers' ability to meet basic needs such as education, health, and improving the quality of housing. From this analysis, most corn farmers are still able to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter at a modest level. However, meeting these needs is often done through survival strategies, such as reducing expenses, borrowing, or seeking additional work outside the agricultural sector.

In general, the welfare condition of corn farmers in the Donggo community is currently still at a moderate to low level, with a high level of economic vulnerability. Farmers' welfare is greatly influenced by fluctuations in corn prices, production costs, and limited access to capital. Therefore, continuous empowerment efforts are needed through income enhancement, strengthening of farmers' institutions, and improvement of access to social services to improve the welfare of corn farmers in the Donggo community (Setyawanto et al., 2025).

The Impact of Socio-Economic Changes on Farmers' Welfare

Socio-economic changes occurring in rural communities have a significant impact on the welfare level of farmers. These changes include social aspects such as patterns of work relationships and changes in cultural values, as well as economic aspects such as price fluctuations, increased production costs, and access to resources. Research results indicate that socio-economic changes have a dual impact on the welfare of corn farmers. On one hand, agricultural modernization and market openness provide opportunities for increased income and production efficiency.

On the other hand, dependence on agricultural inputs and price instability actually increase farmers' economic vulnerability. Social changes, such as the decline of young laborers in the agricultural sector, also impact the sustainability of corn farming. This raises concerns about farmer regeneration and the future sustainability of corn production. These findings are in line with social change theory, which states that modernization does not always bring evenly distributed welfare, but can create socio-economic disparities.

4. DISCUSSION

This study explains and interprets research findings related to socio-economic changes and their impact on the welfare of maize farmers in Donggo District. The discussion is conducted by linking field findings with the concepts and theories of socio-economic change and farmer welfare. These changes are evident from shifts in agricultural work patterns, where the previously strong system of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) has begun to decline and is being replaced by a wage-based work system. This finding aligns with social change theory, which states that modernization and economic rationalization tend to transform traditional social relationships into more individualistic and transactional ones. In addition, changes in farmers' mindsets are also beginning to be seen, where agriculture is no longer viewed solely as a subsistence activity, but as an economic activity oriented towards results and profit. Nevertheless, this shift in mindset has not yet been fully matched by improvements in managerial capacity and access to information, so the benefits of these social changes have not been optimally felt by all farmers (Fachri Fajar Ramadhan dkk, 2023).

From an economic perspective, the findings indicate that changes in the economy of corn farmers in Donggo District are characterized by income instability, increased production costs, and dependence on external parties for capital and marketing. Rising prices of fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides are the main burdens for farmers, while corn selling prices tend to fluctuate and are often unprofitable for farmers during the main harvest. This situation reinforces the view that small farmers are in a weak economic position due to an unbalanced market structure. Dependence on middlemen lowers farmers' bargaining power, so profits are mostly enjoyed by

intermediaries. These findings are in line with agricultural economic theory, which states that limited access to markets and capital is a major factor causing low farmer welfare.

The socio-economic changes that have occurred have had a direct impact on the welfare of corn farmers. Research shows that farmers' welfare is still in the moderate to low category, indicated by unstable household income, limited access to education and healthcare, and the low ability of farmers to meet long-term needs. Although some farmers are able to meet basic needs, this is often done through survival strategies, such as borrowing money or seeking additional work outside the agricultural sector. This condition indicates that corn farming efforts have not yet been fully able to become a sustainable source of welfare for farming households (Alhassan et al., 2014).

These results and discussions imply that agricultural development policies in Donggo District need to be directed not only at increasing corn production but also at strengthening the socio-economic capacity of farmers. Efforts such as strengthening farmer groups, stabilizing prices, and improving access to capital are important to promote the sustainable welfare of farmers.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion regarding socio-economic changes on the welfare of corn farmers in Donggo District, it can be concluded that the socio-economic changes that have occurred have not fully had a positive impact on improving farmers' welfare.

1. Social changes are marked by a shift in work patterns from a mutual cooperation system to a wage system, as well as a change in farmers' mindset towards an economic orientation, but this has not been accompanied by an increase in capacity and adequate access to resources.
2. Changes in the corn farmers' economy are indicated by income instability, increasing production costs, and the weak bargaining position of farmers within the agricultural marketing system. These conditions result in farmers' incomes being unable to sustainably meet their living needs and significantly improve household welfare.
3. The impact of socio-economic changes on farmers' welfare is reflected in the vulnerability of household economies, limited access to education and healthcare services, and the low capacity of farmers to cope with economic risks. Although farmers have implemented various adaptation strategies, such as diversifying income sources, these efforts are still short-term and have not been able to improve overall welfare.

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