

The Influence of Livelihood on the Income of the Niopanda Village Community

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ABSTRACT

Livelihood is a key pillar in determining the level of economic welfare of rural communities. This study aims to analyze the influence of livelihood types on the income levels of residents of Niopanda Village, Kota Baru District, Ende Regency. The focus of the study was directed at residents who work as farmers with a total of 30 respondents. The research method used is a descriptive quantitative method with data collection techniques through questionnaires and interviews, using independent variables (types of livelihood commodities) and dependent variables (income levels) which were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency distributions. The results of the study indicate that the type of livelihood as a farmer is still the dominant sector in the residents' economy, although the income obtained tends to fluctuate and depends on the planting season and market conditions. Quantitatively, it was found that 40% of farmers earn less than Rp1,500,000, 60% rely on cashew commodities with seasonal incomes of Rp500,000–Rp1,000,000, and 40% rely on candlenuts with stable incomes of Rp1,000,000–Rp1,500,000 per month. This study concludes that diversification of agricultural commodities significantly affects the stability of rural community income.

Keywords: *Livelihood, Income, Village Community, Niopanda, Cashew Farmers, Candlenut Farmers.*

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INTRODUCTION

Niopanda Village is one of the villages in Kota Baru District, Ende Regency, where most of the residents make their livelihood in the agricultural sector (Statistik, 2024). Agriculture is the main focus of rural life, both as a source of income and family food security (Bank, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Based on local phenomena, the economic condition of Niopanda Village is still classified as subsistence, where fluctuations in the price of local plantation commodities such as butter and candlenuts greatly determine people's daily purchasing power (Development, 2021; Nations, 2022). According to economic theory, people's income is directly proportional to productivity and the type of livelihood they pursue (Mankiw, 2021; Michael P Todaro & Smith, 2021). However, the agricultural sector often faces various challenges, ranging from dependence on natural factors, limited access to capital, to unstable selling prices of crops.

Although there is extensive research on farmers' income, there is still a research gap regarding how the comparison between annual plantation commodities (cashew) and monthly plantation commodities (candlenut) shapes the income structure of rural households, particularly in the Ende Regency context. Previous studies have generally focused on farmers' income determinants without specifically comparing the contribution of different plantation commodity cycles to household income stability (Ellis, 2000). The main problem that arises is whether the livelihood of a farmer is able to provide an adequate level of income for the community, or whether it actually creates an economic gap compared to other livelihoods.

Therefore, this study is important to determine the extent to which livelihood as a farmer affects the income level of Niopanda Village residents while providing empirical evidence to support rural economic development policies in plantation-based communities.

Livelihood of Rural Communities

Livelihood is the main activity carried out by individuals to earn income to meet the needs of life. According to Soekanto (2017), livelihood is an economic activity that a person carries out continuously to earn income. In rural areas, the majority of the population works in the agricultural sector which is the main source of income and household food security. Todaro & Smith (2018) emphasized that the agricultural sector has an important role in absorbing rural labor, although its productivity is still relatively low compared to the non-agricultural sector. Niopanda Village is an agrarian area where most of the people depend on the agricultural sector. This condition causes fluctuations in residents' income to be greatly influenced by crop yields and prices of agricultural commodities.

Community Income

Income is the result that a person receives from economic activities in a certain period. According to Sukirno (2013), income can be sourced from wages, business results, and investments. The income level of a community is determined by various factors such as the type of job, education, capital, and market conditions. In the context of farmers, income tends to be seasonal because it depends on crop yields, weather, and the stability of the selling price of agricultural products (Siregar, 2019). Low business diversification and limited access to capital often make it difficult for farmers to increase their income sustainably.

The Relationship of Livelihood to Income Level

The type of livelihood has a direct relationship with the income level of the community. Ricardo in Sukirno (2013) explained that labor productivity is the main determinant in generating income. The agricultural sector, which is labor-intensive and dependent on natural factors, often provides fluctuating results. Research by Rahmawati (2020) shows that people who work in the non-agricultural sector tend to have higher incomes than farmers. Meanwhile, the results of the study by Wahyudi (2021) confirm that diversification of agricultural activities, such as crop processing, can increase farmers' incomes. A similar study by Sari (2019) found that the more diverse the livelihoods of rural communities, the higher their level of welfare.

Research Relevance

Based on the theory and results of previous research, it can be concluded that livelihood has a significant influence on people's income levels. In the context of Niopanda Village, where most of the population works as farmers, this study is important to analyze the extent to which employment in the agricultural sector is able to provide adequate income. The results of the research are expected to be a consideration for the village government in improving the welfare of the community through the development of a more productive agricultural sector.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The research sample was 30 respondents, all of whom had a livelihood as farmers, who were selected using purposive sampling techniques with the criteria of farmers who own active land in Niopanda Village (Etikan et al., 2016). The variables in this study consist of the Independent Variable (X), namely the type of livelihood commodities (cashew and candlenut farmers), and the Dependent Variable (Y), namely the level of community income (Sugiyono, 2022). Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews regarding the amount of monthly income, land area, types of crops managed, and factors affecting productivity. The measurement scale used for the income questionnaire instrument is the ratio scale in Rupiah

units and is supported by categorical data on income levels (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). Data analysis was carried out quantitatively by calculating the frequency distribution and average income of respondents using descriptive statistical techniques and then interpreting the findings in the form of discussion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data collection from 30 respondents, the following information was obtained: As many as 40% of farmers have a monthly income below Rp1,500,000. To facilitate the analysis of income variations, concrete data from respondents are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Frequency Distribution Based on Farmers' Income and Commodities

Types of Commodities (Livelihoods)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Average Revenue per Month	Nature of Income
Butter Plant (Cashew)	18	60%	IDR 500,000 – IDR 1,000,000	Fluctuating (Seasonal)
Pecan Plant	12	40%	IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 1,500,000	Stable (All Year Round)
Total	30	100%	IDR 950,000 (Total Average)	Low - Medium

Discussion

The results of the study on 30 respondents who earn a living as farmers in Niopanda Village show that the most cultivated types of plants are mente (cashews) and candlenuts. These two commodities are the main choice because they are in accordance with the soil and climate conditions in the region. However, the difference in the characteristics of the two crops also affects the income level of farmers.

Butter Plant (Cashew)

Butter is one of the plantation commodities that is quite promising for farmers. The results of the study showed that out of 30 respondents, around 60% of farmers cultivated butter crops as their main source of income. This plant was chosen because: 1) It has quite good resistance to rocky soil conditions and dry climates. 2) Butternut fruit has a relatively high economic value, especially the seeds. 3) The market for buttermilk seeds is quite wide both at the local and outside the regional level.

However, the disadvantage of the butternut crop is that the harvest is highly dependent on the season. Harvest only occurs once a year, so the income of farmers who depend entirely on this crop tends to be unstable. During the harvest season, income can reach Rp500,000-Rp1,000,000 per month (during the harvest period), but outside the harvest season, income decreases drastically and farmers only rely on by-products from pseudo-butter fruits (which are usually used as drinks or local food). This dependency factor is in line with Siregar (2019) theory which states that seasonal commodity farmers' income has high economic vulnerability.

Pecan Plant

As many as 40% of respondents manage hazelnut plants as their main source of income. The hazelnut plant is relatively more durable and can be harvested several times a year. Pecan seeds are widely used as cooking and industrial ingredients, so the market demand is quite stable. From the results of the interviews, the average pecan farmer earns an income ranging from IDR 1,000,000 to IDR 1,500,000 per month, depending on the land area and the number of trees owned. Although the selling price of pecan is not as high as butter, the advantage is the availability of more sustainable crops, so that it is able to provide a more stable income throughout the year.

Comparison of Butter and Pecan to Income

In comparison, butter crops provide greater profit potential in the harvest season, but have a high risk of income fluctuations. Meanwhile, candlenuts, although the yield is not as large as butter, are able to maintain the economic stability of farmers' households because they harvest more frequently and prices are relatively stable. Thus, the strategy that many farmers do is to combine these two types of crops. Farmers who have large land usually plant butter

as the main commodity, while candlenuts are used as complementary crops to maintain the availability of income outside the butter harvest season. This proves the empirical truth of Wahyudi (2021) study that crop diversification is an essential key in sustaining farmers' economic resilience.

Socio-Economic Implications

These two types of plants have a great influence on the income structure of the Niopanda Village community. Farmers who rely only on butter tend to experience income gaps between seasons, while pecan farmers are relatively more stable but with moderate income levels. Diversification of butter and hazelnut crops has proven to be a solution to reduce the risk of income fluctuations and increase family economic resilience.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the type of livelihood significantly influences the income level of the community in Niopanda Village, thereby achieving the main objective of the research. Livelihoods based on cashew and candlenut farming play an essential role in supporting household economies. Farmers who depend primarily on seasonal commodities such as cashew (60% of respondents) generally earn higher profits during harvest periods, ranging from IDR 500,000 to IDR 1,000,000 per month, but experience income instability during the off-season. In contrast, farmers cultivating monthly commodities such as candlenut (40% of respondents) receive relatively more stable monthly incomes, ranging from IDR 1,000,000 to IDR 1,500,000. The findings indicate that combining both commodities through livelihood diversification is the most effective strategy for reducing income fluctuations and improving household economic resilience. Therefore, the village government should support farmers by providing post-harvest processing facilities and strengthening market access, while farmers are encouraged to diversify crop cultivation through intercropping systems to ensure more stable and sustainable income throughout the year.

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