


## The role of human resource management in improving the welfare of farmers in ngada district

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Human Resource Management, farmer welfare, Ngada Regency</p>	<p>Ngada Regency is one of East Nusa Tenggara Province's regencies with great agricultural potential. However, the welfare of farmers in this district is still relatively low. One of the factors causing this is the low quality of farmers' human resources (HR), so a planned role of human resources is needed to realize farmers' welfare. Thus, this research analyzes Human Resource Management's role in improving farmers' welfare in Ngada Regency. This research used qualitative research methods. Data collection techniques in this study were carried out by literature study, observation, and interviews. The data that has been collected is then analyzed using three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that implementing good HR management can improve the quality of farmers' human resources, increasing farmers' productivity and welfare. Here are some steps that can be taken to improve the quality of farmers' human resources, namely, farmer extension programs, farmer coaching programs, introduction and training programs for applying new technology, and social assistance programs for farmers. Agriculture can become the economy's driving force through implementing these programs and realizing optimal food security. Thus, welfare improvement and poverty reduction can be realized in Ngada Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province.</p>
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### INTRODUCTION

Eliminating poverty is very difficult and troubling for the world, including Indonesia. BPS data on the percentage of poverty in Indonesia over the past few years has decreased slowly until the last time a survey was conducted in March 2023. The percentage of poor people was 9.36 percent, with the number of poor people reaching 25.90 million people; this figure is far from the poverty rate targeted at the MDGs in 2015, which is 7.5 percent (Mutia, 2020). This shows that poverty reduction efforts in Indonesia are still not optimal, which is unfortunate considering the vast territory of the Indonesian state with abundant natural resources. Abundant natural resources can be utilized, one of which is in the agricultural sector.

The agricultural sector plays a very important role in the Indonesian economy, and agriculture has become a top priority in development. When the new order of agriculture

became the development goal, it was the government's main concern in the current era. Farmers are the most occupied livelihood in Indonesia (Rahayu, 2020). There is a problem where agriculture reduces poverty, but farmers remain poor. According to Wanto in Yacoub & Mutiaradina (2020), as a country with a relatively large area with promising agricultural land, villagers living in rural areas should live a prosperous life. However, in reality, it has not been such a condition because most people who live in rural areas, especially farmers/agricultural workers, are still poor.

Poverty is closely related to welfare, and poor people are not prosperous. Farmer income is one of the benchmarks for measuring farmer welfare, a benchmark for agricultural development (Alfrida & Noor, 2017). For this reason, the agricultural system must be further improved, this is to improve the welfare of the farming community. Research (Wuli, 2023) shows that one of the obstacles faced by the agricultural sector in Indonesia is the limited quality of human resources (HR) in agriculture. The low level of welfare for farmers in Indonesia is due to their inadequate abilities, such as managerial skills, weak bargaining power, limited access to capital and information, and low education levels. There is a declining interest of young people in agriculture because there is an assumption that being a farmer, in addition to being less promising economically, is also considered a less prestigious job, so it becomes a big task that the role of human resource management can improve the welfare of farmers, especially in the Ngada Regency of East Nusa Tenggara Province, which has potential in the agricultural sector.

Previous research by Tewu (2015), which examined the role of human resources in improving the activities of farmer groups in Tember Village, showed the fact that it turned out that human resources in the Tember Village farmer group were still not playing a role properly due to others, first, lack of information and socialization about their functions and roles for farmers, Second, the level of education of members in farmer groups is relatively low, thus affecting their knowledge and ability to adopt innovations in agriculture and implement these innovations to improve their welfare and quality of life.

Another study by (Yuniati et al., 2018) examines institutional strengthening to improve the welfare of sugarcane farmers; the results of the study show that sugarcane farmer institutions play a role in helping farmer activities and improving farmers' bargaining position in running sugarcane agribusiness. However, farmer institutions are generally still run by prioritizing the interests of certain groups, while smallholders/smallholders still have limited access. Therefore, institutional strengthening of sugarcane farmers is needed to increase farmers' access to financial and non-financial institutions. Institutional strengthening is carried out by formulating strategies from organizational, resource, service, and cooperation or partnership network aspects. Institutional strengthening will encourage farmers to increase productivity and improve sugarcane farmers' welfare.

The novelty of this research is the object of his research, namely the role of human resource management (HR) in improving the welfare of farmers in Ngada Regency. This research will provide a clear picture of human resource management's role in improving farmers' welfare. The results of this research can be used to provide policy and program recommendations that can improve the welfare of farmers. These recommendations can be

used by the government, non-governmental organizations, and other parties related to improving farmers' welfare. So, this study aims to examine the role of human resource management (HR) in improving the welfare of farmers in Ngada District, East Nusa Tenggara Province.

## METHODS

This study used qualitative research methods. According to Nugrahani and Hum (2014), qualitative research produces findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or other quantitative means. This research was conducted in Ngada Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. In this study, the data collection method was carried out through three main approaches: literature study, observation, and interviews. The data collection process begins with conducting a literature study, which involves searching and analyzing various sources of information such as scientific journals, books, and documents related to human resource management in the context of improving farmer welfare. Meanwhile, observation is used to collect data by directly observing situations or activities related to human resource management in the agricultural sector of Ngada Regency. Interviews were also conducted, involving various related parties such as farmers, farm managers, workers in the agricultural sector, and other stakeholders. The collected data is then analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ngada Regency is located in the central part of Flores, East Nusa Tenggara Province. Ngada Regency is one of the East Nusa Tenggara Province districts with great agricultural potential. East Nusa Tenggara Province's economy is illustrated in the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) structure, where the agricultural sector contributes the most among other business fields (Nono et al., 2023). This indicates that the agricultural sector has a major role in supporting East Nusa Tenggara Province's economy, specifically in Ngada Regency.

In Wuli (2022) there is a vision. One of the mission points of Ngada Regency for 2021-2024 is the realization of a superior, independent, and cultured Ngada community focusing on environmentally friendly agriculture and tourism. Meanwhile, one of its missions mentioned regional economic development through key sectors, including agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and tourism, with attention to the environment. In the vision and mission affirming that the agricultural sector is one of the strategic roles in the economic development agenda of Ngada Regency, the selection of the agricultural sector as one of the key sectors in economic development reflects the important role of agriculture in contributing to local economic growth.

Ngada Regency has an area of agricultural land, abundant natural resources, and a climate supporting agriculture. Raising the potential for community welfare through the agricultural sector such as South Golewa District is one of the districts in Ngada Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, which has a tropical climate and is located at an altitude of 0-750 meters above sea level. South Golewa District has agricultural potential in food

commodities, horticulture, and plantations. The agricultural potential of South Golewa District is the largest contributor to Ngada District in agriculture. The leading commodities spread in villages in the South Golewa sub-district include rice, corn, bananas, cocoa, and candlenuts (Taus et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the Wolomeze sub-district, which is part of the Ngada Regency area, the Wolomeze sub-district has strategic potential in the agricultural sector, especially rice, corn, and horticultural crops (Hamakonda et al., 2023). While in the capital city of Ngada regency, namely Bajawa with its famous product, Bajawa Coffee is one of the best quality coffee producers in Flores, East Nusa Tenggara (Wuli et al., 2023). These potentials can become food strength in the Ngada district.

Food, especially staple foods, plays a very important role in Indonesia. Most major foodstuffs in Indonesia, such as cereals, which include rice, corn, and flour, have a major impact on people's daily lives. Of the three, rice is the most dominant food choice for the population. The rice plant is one of Indonesia's most important and widely cultivated food crop commodities because it is a staple of the majority of the Indonesian population. For the people of Indonesia, rice is one of the primary needs because it is a source of energy and carbohydrates (Wuli et al., 2023). With this opportunity, it should be able to contribute to the welfare of farmers.

Law No. 11 of 2009 concerning social welfare states that welfare is a condition of meeting the material, spiritual, and social needs of citizens to live a decent life and develop themselves to carry out their social functions. Many workers come from the agricultural sector which should be protected and prospered because they have contributed to meeting the needs of many people. However, in Indonesia, farmers are often disadvantaged by their small income. People in the agricultural sector are generally always poorer than people whose main sources of income are from other sectors, especially the manufacturing, finance, and trade industries. However, each sector's income varies by subsector or business group (Pamungkas et al., 2015). The close relationship between welfare and poverty indicates that to reduce the poverty rate, the government needs to significantly improve people's welfare, including paying attention to the needs of farmers.

Farmers in Indonesia are synonymous with low income and education levels, so improving farmers' welfare will indirectly impact poverty alleviation in rural areas (Pamungkas et al., 2015). In (Rahmawati, 2020), the welfare of farmers significantly reduces poverty rates in rural areas. Improving the welfare of farmers will effectively reduce rural poverty levels if accompanied by equal income distribution. This means that, strictly speaking, improving the welfare of farmers can make a major contribution to reducing poverty in rural areas.

The welfare of farmers in the Ngada district is still relatively low, judging from the composition of the Ngada economy, which is still dominated by the agricultural sector at 35.02%. Still, the 2023 BPS NTT publication figures place Ngada in third place as the smallest percentage of poor people in NTT Province, below Kupang City and East Flores (Introductory speech to the Ngada Regent report, 2022). One factor that can be identified as the cause of the low welfare of farmers is the lack of quality human resources (HR)

among farmers (Burano, 2016). Therefore, human resource management efforts are needed to overcome this problem.

According to Sastrohadiwiryono (Samsuni, 2017), Human Resource Management or workforce management, namely utilization, coaching, knowledge, arrangement, development, and labor elements. Good and bad employees or employees to achieve the maximum use and usability results according to the organization. This means that HR management focuses on human management strategies in the work environment, by paying special attention to human resource management to make an optimal contribution to achieving organizational goals. HR is a central factor in an organization, whatever its form and purpose, the organization is made based on the vision, mission, and goals for the benefit of humans, and in its implementation, is managed and managed by humans so that humans are a strategic factor in all institutional or organizational activities (Larasati, 2018).

To improve HR management that has the potential to positively impact farmers' welfare, especially in Ngada District, a number of HR management programs can be implemented. This includes extension programs for farmers, farmer development programs, training programs on introducing and applying the latest technology, and social assistance programs aimed at farmers.

One way to improve the quality of farmers' human resources is through counseling or training (Ardita et al., 2017). Agricultural extension is defined as a learning process for farmers and their families and other agricultural business actors so that they know, want, and can help and organize themselves in accessing markets, agricultural technology, and capital to increase farm production, efficiency, and business effectiveness and family income (Bahua, 2016). In the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 35 of 2022 concerning strengthening the function of agricultural extension, Agricultural Extension is a learning process for Main Actors and Business Actors so that they are willing and able to help themselves in accessing market information, technology, capital, and other resources, as an effort to increase productivity, business efficiency, income, and welfare, as well as increase awareness in preserving environmental functions.

The purpose of the extension is to increase knowledge and skills and change farmers' attitudes toward striving for their farming towards better farming, trying to farm more profitably (Better Business), and living more prosperously (Better Living) (Romadi & Warnaen, 2021). By summarizing these three aspects, agricultural extension aims to form more skilled and knowledgeable farmers who can run agricultural businesses efficiently and profitably, and achieve a better level of welfare in daily life.

Improving farmers' skills and knowledge can be achieved through various extension activities, such as providing information on agricultural technology, farm management, and marketing of agricultural products. To increase agricultural productivity and product prices, and develop agricultural business diversification. With this approach, farmers are expected to successfully face the challenges of the dynamic world of agriculture and improve their overall standard of living. Extension workers have a crucial role in implementing extension programs, where they hold an important key to providing knowledge and skills to produce

superior farmer change. Extension workers can implement this concept through farmer development activities.

Farmer development is a series of activities or programs that aim to guide, provide support, and increase the capacity of farmers in certain aspects. Activities carried out in control, delegation, direction, consultation, and skill training are important in assessing coaching benchmarks (Yustriani, 2022).

Optimal coaching can be achieved by maximizing efforts in guiding farmer groups. This includes control efforts and direction toward improvement while increasing the potential of human resources through skill improvement (Yustriani, 2022). The benefits of the farmer development program include farmers becoming more knowledgeable about agricultural technology, farm business management, and marketing of agricultural products. Both farmers became more motivated to develop their farming business and more independent in making decisions. In addition, agricultural products become more qualified to compete in the market. Finally, farmer development programs can create new jobs, especially in extension services, mentoring, and marketing of agricultural products. Therefore, the farmer development program is a comprehensive effort involving various parties to improve farmers' welfare and the agricultural sector's sustainability. Coaching can cover various areas, such as the improvement of agricultural knowledge, the development of practical skills, aspects of agricultural business management, or the introduction and training of applying new technologies that farmers urgently need.

Along with technological developments, there is much potential to utilize technology to increase agricultural productivity and sustainability in Indonesia. Using tools and machines in production is intended to increase efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, yield quality, and reduce farmers' workloads. Agricultural technology introduces and uses mechanical assistance to perform agricultural operations (Rusydi & Rusli, 2022). Therefore, to achieve convenience in the agricultural sector through the use of new technologies, it is important to organize technology application introduction and training programs for farmers to introduce the latest innovations and developments in agriculture and provide farmers with skills and knowledge so that they can effectively adopt and implement these technologies.

In the introduction and training of the application of new technology for farmers, several things need to be considered, including:

1. The needs of farmers and new technologies introduced and trained must be met by analyzing the specific needs of local farmers, including understanding soil conditions, climate, crop types, and challenges farmers face.
2. Relevant agricultural products training should include the application of technology that specifically relates to the type of crop or food yield normally grown or cultivated by farmers in the area.
3. Farmer skills training programs should accommodate different skill levels, ranging from advanced farmers to those with a lower understanding of new technologies.

4. Sustainability: Develop strategies to ensure farmers can continue applying the technology after training. This involves providing support after training, ongoing resource access, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Introducing and training new technologies for farmers is an important strategy to ensure that the agricultural sector continues to thrive and keep up with the current world competition. In agriculture or production, new technology can provide benefits and reduce production costs if balanced with increased productivity (Apriani et al., 2018). The production function can change when there is a technological change, such as an upward shift. These improvements reflect the potential for increased production or efficiency by adopting new technologies. Therefore, introducing and training new technology can bring out farmers' competitiveness in the face of the times. Still, besides that, social assistance programs for farmers are human resource management that cannot be ignored.

Social assistance programs for farmers are designed to provide financial support, equipment, or other resources to farmers to improve their conditions and the sustainability of agricultural enterprises. According to (Adam, 2020), the implementation of empowerment social assistance programs for farmers will have an impact in the form of increasing the motivation of farmers to carry out their businesses earnestly and responsibly, the growth of partnership interactions between controllers, implementers, and beneficiaries who are concerned with a clear mind, transparent, hard work, responsible and sincere in implementing the program and can provide sources of income to meet needs and improve the independence of farmers in developing their business.

Social assistance to farmers can be in the form of cash assistance, which can be given to farmers who need assistance to meet their living needs. Assistance with agricultural facilities and infrastructure can be in the form of seeds, fertilizers, agricultural equipment, and agricultural infrastructure, and capital assistance can be provided to farmers to develop their farming businesses. The importance of social assistance programs to farmers lies in the support provided to them to overcome challenges and increase production capacity and welfare. This program can be an effective instrument in achieving the goals of sustainable and inclusive agricultural development.

Improving farmers' human resource management requires cooperation from various parties, including the government, the private sector, and the community. Through farmer extension programs, farmer coaching, the introduction of new technology training, and farmer social assistance can significantly contribute to improving agricultural human resource management. Through this tiered approach, farmers acquire theoretical knowledge and gain practical and personal support in applying these concepts in daily agricultural activities. The integration of various aspects of the program also ensures that farmers can optimize the utilization of their human resources with the support of technology and financial sustainability. Thus, this program can contribute to improving overall agricultural HR management.

By implementing the program in an integrated manner, it is hoped that Ngada Regency can improve the welfare of farmers, make agriculture an economic driving force,

and realize optimal food security. Thus, welfare improvement and poverty reduction can be realized in Ngada District, East Nusa Tenggara Province.

## CONCLUSION

Ngada Regency in East Nusa Tenggara Province has significant agricultural potential. However, the welfare level of farmers in this region is still low. This is caused by the lack of quality human resources (HR) of farmers, so a planned role of human resources is needed to realize the welfare of farmers. Implementing effective HR management positively impacts the quality of farmers' human resources, increasing their productivity and welfare. Human resource management plays an important role in improving farmers' welfare, which can improve farmers' skills and knowledge, increase farmers' work motivation, and improving aspects of farmers' social welfare. Some concrete steps to implement HR management that can be taken to improve farmers' welfare include farmer extension programs, farmer development programs, introduction and training programs on the application of new technology, and social assistance programs for farmers. Implementing human resource development programs that focus on improving the welfare of farmers is expected to solve problems in Ngada District regarding improving farmer welfare, increasing agricultural productivity, reducing poverty, and positively contributing to the region's economy.

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