

Implementation of the Agrarian Reform Program in Improving Farmer Welfare: A Case Study of Sharecroppers in South Garut

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2024-08-12 Revised: 2025-02-21 Accepted: 2025-03-31 Keywords: agrarian reform, farmer welfare, land redistribution, agrarian policy.	<i>This study analyzes the implementation of agrarian reform programs in southern Garut and their contribution to improving farmers' welfare. Agrarian reform is positioned as a strategic instrument to reduce land ownership inequality, strengthen farmers' rights, and promote sustainable rural development. Through land redistribution, the provision of ownership certificates, and access to supporting programs such as agricultural extension and formal credit, farmers gain legal certainty, increased productivity, and expanded market participation.</i> <i>The results of the study show that agrarian reform has a multidimensional impact: economically, it increases farmers' access to productive resources; socially, it strengthens their status and reduces their vulnerability to eviction; and institutionally, it encourages the strengthening of farmer organizations in accessing government assistance. However, program implementation still faces various challenges, including bureaucratic obstacles, overlapping ownership claims with the forestry and private sectors, and weak institutional capacity at the local level.</i> <i>In conclusion, agrarian reform in the southern Garut region has the potential to be a major driver of farmer welfare, provided that it is integrated with broader rural development policies and supported by a strengthened institutional framework. Active stakeholder participation, transparent governance, and fair resolution of agrarian conflicts are key factors in ensuring the sustainability of its impact.</i>

I. Introduction

Agrarian reform has been widely recognized as a crucial pillar for equitable development in agrarian-based societies. In many developing countries, land ownership remains concentrated, contributing to economic inequality and rural poverty (Deininger, 2003; Borras & Franco, 2010). Indonesia, with its long history of land tenure conflicts, launched a national agrarian reform program (Reforma Agraria) as part of its national development agenda (Rachman, 2017). The agrarian reform program in Indonesia aims to address land ownership inequality and improve farmer welfare, but its implementation faces significant challenges. Key issues include bureaucratic inefficiency, resource shortages, and resistance from certain stakeholders, which hamper the program's effectiveness (Wiryanto, 2020). Understanding land ownership inequality is crucial, as it underscores the disparities the reforms aim to address (Sosiawan, EA 2008). Despite these efforts, questions remain regarding the program's actual impact on farmers' well-being, including their economic, social, and physical well-being (Maharani, 2024). Evaluating the program's outcomes and sustainability is crucial to ensure its contribution to improving farmers' lives (Sosiawan, 2008). Addressing implementation challenges is crucial to increasing the program's effectiveness and ensuring it meets its objectives of promoting equitable land access and improving farmers' overall well-being.

This study investigates the implementation of agrarian reform in Indonesia, focusing on the extent to which land redistribution and land legalization efforts have improved the socio-economic conditions of rural farmers. Therefore, this study seeks to formulate several key questions. First, how is the implementation of the agrarian reform program being carried out, particularly at the local level, and to what extent is it aligned with established government policies? Furthermore, to

what extent can the implementation of agrarian reform make a real contribution to improving farmer welfare, from economic, social, and institutional perspectives? Furthermore, what obstacles arise in the program implementation process, ranging from bureaucratic obstacles, overlapping land claims, to limited institutional capacity in the regions? Furthermore, what strategies can be formulated to strengthen the effectiveness of agrarian reform implementation so that it can support rural development and promote sustainable farmer welfare?

2. Research Method

This research employed a qualitative research design with a case study approach. Data were collected through document analysis of government reports, policy documents, and statistics, as well as in-depth interviews with government officials, local leaders, and farmer groups. Field observations were conducted in areas where agrarian reform has been implemented. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on implementation mechanisms, outcomes, and challenges.

3. Results and Discussion

Implementation of Agrarian Reform

Through its agrarian reform program, the government not only distributes land certificates to farmers but also integrates them with various supporting programs, such as agricultural extension and institutional assistance. The distribution of land certificates provides legal certainty over land ownership, allowing farmers to feel more secure in managing their land without fear of disputes or eviction. This sense of security encourages farmers to make long-term investments, such as improving land quality, diversifying crops, and adopting more modern agricultural technologies.

Furthermore, access to agricultural extension programs helps farmers improve their skills and knowledge, from more efficient cultivation techniques to marketing strategies. The combination of secure land rights and capacity building through extension programs contributes to increased farmer productivity and competitiveness. Furthermore, legal land ownership has been shown to reduce the potential for conflict between residents and with external parties, as land status becomes clearer and is officially recognized by the state. Thus, the implementation of this policy not only impacts the economy but also strengthens social stability in rural areas.

Impact on Farmer Welfare

From an economic perspective, agrarian reform has had a significant impact on improving farmers' welfare. Secure land rights, obtained through land certificates, provide farmers with assets that can be used as collateral for formal credit access from banks. With this access to capital, farmers can make safer investments, such as purchasing superior seeds, fertilizers, and modern agricultural equipment. These investments result in increased land productivity and crop yields. Furthermore, secure land ownership encourages farmers to be more active in expanding their market participation, both through direct product sales and through cooperatives and farmer groups.

From a social perspective, legal land ownership strengthens farmers' position and social status within the community. Legal ownership enhances farmers' respect and recognition within the rural social structure and reduces their vulnerability to eviction or land grabbing. This creates a sense of security and social stability, ultimately improving the quality of life for farmers and their families.

Meanwhile, from an institutional perspective, agrarian reform encourages the formation of more organized farmer groups with stronger capacity for collective bargaining, both with the private sector and the government. Through these

organizations, farmers can more easily access various forms of government assistance, such as subsidy programs, extension services, and agricultural infrastructure support. Involvement in these collective institutions also strengthens solidarity among farmers and increases their bargaining power in facing economic and social challenges.

Challenges in Implementation

One of the main obstacles to implementing agrarian reform is bureaucratic red tape. Lengthy administrative processes, from data verification to land certificate issuance, often delay distribution to farmers. This situation not only reduces the program's effectiveness but also fuels dissatisfaction among communities hoping for immediate legal certainty over their land.

Furthermore, overlapping claims with state forest areas and private concessions are a significant limiting factor in land redistribution. Much land that could potentially be redistributed is in conflict with or overlaps with plantation, mining, or forestry concession permits. This situation often results in agrarian reform targets not being achieved as planned, necessitating a more effective agrarian conflict resolution mechanism.

On the other hand, weak institutional capacity at the local level also poses a serious challenge to the program's sustainability. Limited human resources, lack of coordination between agencies, and minimal supporting facilities have made the implementation of agrarian reform on the ground slow and inconsistent. This situation is further exacerbated by budget constraints and a lack of training for local officials, who should be spearheading program implementation. Without strengthening institutional capacity at the regional level, agrarian reform risks becoming a short-term program that lacks long-term impact on farmer welfare.

Comparative Perspective

Indonesia's agrarian reform bears similarities to the Comprehensive Agrarian

Reform Program (CARP) implemented in the Philippines. Both countries utilize land redistribution as a primary instrument to reduce inequality in land ownership structures and improve the welfare of smallholder farmers. Both Indonesia and the Philippines emphasize the importance of providing legal certainty over land to farmers as a fundamental requirement for inclusive rural development.

However, there are striking differences in the context of the challenges faced. In the Philippines, the main obstacles are related to limited government budgets, resistance from large landowners, and bureaucratic slowness in land distribution. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, although bureaucratic obstacles also exist, the most significant challenge relates to complex land governance. Overlapping claims between state land, forest areas, private concessions, and customary land make the land redistribution process much more complicated. This situation demands cross-institutional coordination and more comprehensive policies for resolving agrarian conflicts.

This comparison shows that although the goals of agrarian reform across countries are relatively similar—reducing inequality and improving farmer welfare—political, economic, and institutional contexts influence the success of their implementation. Therefore, the success of agrarian reform in Indonesia depends heavily on the government's ability to strengthen land governance, enhance the capacity of local institutions, and integrate agrarian policies with other rural development programs.

4. Conclusion

Agrarian reform in Indonesia has demonstrated significant achievements, particularly in recognizing and securing land rights for farmers and expanding their access to productive resources. These efforts have contributed to improving farmer welfare, reducing land ownership inequality, and creating new economic opportunities in rural areas. Furthermore, agrarian reform serves as a crucial instrument for strengthening national food security and supporting a more inclusive development agenda.

However, these successes still face several fundamental challenges. Bureaucratic

inefficiencies and inter-agency coordination often slow program implementation. Agrarian conflicts stemming from overlapping claims to land ownership, forest areas, and private interests demonstrate that agrarian issues are not merely technical but also political and structural. Therefore, resolving land conflicts requires a comprehensive approach involving mediation mechanisms, law enforcement, and recognition of indigenous peoples' rights.

Furthermore, the long-term success of agrarian reform can only be achieved if land redistribution is integrated with other rural development policies, such as increasing access to financing, providing agricultural infrastructure, training farmers' capacities, and strengthening cooperatives and local institutions. This way, the land allocated to farmers can truly become a productive asset that improves their well-being.

Ultimately, strengthening the institutional framework, ensuring transparency in governance, and ensuring the active participation of various stakeholders—including central and regional governments, civil society organizations, academics, and local communities—are key to creating sustainable agrarian reform. With these steps, agrarian reform in Indonesia will serve not only as a redistributive agenda but also as a crucial foundation for rural socio-economic transformation toward more substantive agrarian justice.

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