

**LOCAL CULTURE OF FARMERS IN THE TRANSITION OF CORN  
FARMING**  
(Case study in Like Peace, Gorontalo Regency)

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**ABSTRACT**

Generally, farmers in Gorontalo Regency use local corn seeds to meet their family's food needs. The use of local seeds is considered a job that is easy to carry out, does not require a lot of energy, does not require a large area of land, does not use fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and is resistant to storage for a long period of time. Local corn seeds that are easily available around the place of residence are a major consideration, and to plant until it is time for harvest, farmers do not need money. This reality is an illustration of the ability of farmers to cultivate crops, and is considered as knowledge obtained from nature, as conveyed by Kadus, that growing local corn does not require fertilizer, in 1 hole 5 grains of corn are filled, after that it is left until the time comes for harvesting. This study uses an ethnographic method, which aims to identify, understand, and describe the socio-cultural phenomena experienced by farmers. The research on hybrid corn was conducted in Suka Damai village, Gorontalo Regency, Gorontalo Province, aiming to seek knowledge of farmers in using local corn seeds, and using hybrid corn seeds. The selection of the village was peaceful with consideration of the area of dry land for growing corn and most of the population working as corn farmers.

Result from this research is This opinion becomes a benchmark to say that farmers have the freedom to make their choices, according to the situation and conditions they face. Thus, in making decisions, farmers are based on experiences resulting from the learning process.

**Keywords: local culture, corn farmers, Gorontalo Regency**

**INTRODUCTION**

Corn is a basic need for the people of Gorontalo, which is processed traditionally, so that it becomes a food ingredient. Local corn cultivation is very important for the community because it is "mootame polango" (Farid; 2007), and is the principle of subsistence for Gorontalo farmers. The principle of mootame polango (overcoming hunger), is a knowledge possessed by farmers for decision making in cultivating agricultural land. For farmers who adhere to the philosophy of subsistence, make decisions based on experience, learn from others, and learn more from nature to plant local corn seeds.

Avoiding failure in agricultural activities is a hallmark of traditional farming systems, and farmers are more rational in choosing the principle by Roumasset (farmer's economic morals; 27-28), called Safety first, in choosing the type of seed and planting method, then it only means that farmers prefer to minimize the possibility of a disaster than to maximize income. The average obtained. The selection of local corn seeds is more aimed at meeting the food needs of farming families, and the leaves, corn stalks can be used to feed livestock.

The use of local corn seeds has been eliminated by the corn-based agropolitan program introduced by the Gorontalo Provincial Government, which uses hybrid seeds. The introduction of hybrid corn seeds to farmers has created tensions in farming, so that in making decisions, it is very important to choose the seeds to be planted.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses an ethnographic method, which aims to identify, understand, and describe the socio-cultural phenomena experienced by farmers. The research on hybrid corn was conducted in Suka Damai village, Gorontalo Regency, Gorontalo Province, aiming to seek knowledge of farmers in using local corn seeds, and using hybrid corn seeds. The selection of the village was peaceful with consideration of the area of dry land for growing corn and most of the population working as corn farmers.

To maximize the data obtained in the field, the interview technique with farmers is used to multiply the considerations in making decisions. In determining informants, referring to the opinion of Spradley (2007:68) that a good informant must at least meet five minimum requirements, namely; 1). Full enculturation, meaning that a good informant is one who knows the culture well, 2). Direct involvement, a good informant is one who is directly involved in the cultural atmosphere, 3). An unfamiliar cultural atmosphere, namely by choosing the right informant from a cultural atmosphere that is foreign to the researcher, 4). Sufficient time, namely selecting informants who have sufficient time to participate in an interview, 5). Non-analytic, namely selecting informants who can describe various events and actions in a way that is almost without analysis of the meaning and significance of an event or action. Furthermore, the collected data is analyzed referring to the relationship between the concept and the reality in the field. This is in accordance with the instructions of Endraswara (2003) which says that by conducting continuous data analysis, researchers can obtain a complete understanding of the research results achieved in research problems.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. LOCAL CORN SEED**

Generally, farmers in Gorontalo Regency use local corn seeds to meet their family's food needs. The use of local seeds is considered a job that is easy to carry out, does not require a lot of energy, does not require a large area of land, does not use fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and is resistant to storage for a long period of time. Local corn seeds that are easily available around the place of residence are a major consideration, and to plant until it is time for harvest, farmers do not need

money. This reality is an illustration of the ability of farmers to cultivate crops, and is considered as knowledge obtained from nature, as conveyed by Kadus, that growing local corn does not require fertilizer, in 1 hole 5 grains of corn are filled, after that it is left until the time comes for harvesting.

The use of local corn seeds makes human farmers who choose to live a simple life, blend with nature, and prioritize the principle of subsistence. A Russian economist AV Chainov discusses the rural peasant economy (Eric R Wolf: 1985: 21), namely: the first fundamental characteristic of the farmer's farm economy is that it is a family economy. Its entire organization is determined by the size and composition of the peasant family and by the coordination of its consumption demands with the number of hands working. Chainov's explanation is in line with that experienced by a farmer named Bapak Daud (89 years old), that mopomulo bindhe kiki mowali karajalo lohihilawo, waw bohepomulo totili lobebe. U mohiyode ma's energy shatters at harvest, usually he hiyowa limayitua waw takeino. Wanu mayilapato tipiliyo, matahuwolo to huwali, de maparalu ualolo poli mohama patauhilingalo. This Balinese explanation is more about the social structure used in organizing an activity, and creating a culture of gotong royong among the nuclear family.

Another advantage of planting local corn seeds (binde kiki) is that they can be consumed without waiting for the corn to be 3 months old, but when the corn cobs are full, they can be picked to eat. The condition of corn that is still young and can be picked, especially when there is no food supply at home. This was explained by Mr. Ade, that when we need food and the supply of rice-corn (baalobinte) runs out, young corn is the choice to eat. As for how young corn is consumed before being consumed, it is boiled first, and sometimes young corn is used as an ingredient for corn buckwheat. Pak Ade's opinion is important to understand, to recognize local corn as a crop to anticipate the food crisis that has been predicted by farmers. Ability to anticipate all forms of possibility that will threaten life, make traditional farmers as human beings who have extraordinary knowledge. They are able to create seeds that do not take long to grow, and can be taken at any time to be eaten.

There are many expert opinions and experiences of farmers in pursuing traditional farming systems, especially in terms of planting time, in subsistence-oriented agricultural activities. In a society that is still very thick with traditional values and norms, all activities are carried out based on consultation with religious leaders, traditional leaders, even people who know the natural cycles. This is done to expect the blessing of community leaders, so that in starting to plant corn can avoid unwanted disasters. As stated by Eric (1985:176), that in many parties, farmers in various regions of the world celebrate their interdependence and strengthen the provisions that govern it. Such parties vary in form from offering prayers to a patron saint in Spain to fireworks displays that are burned in honor of patron gods in some areas of China. The same thing is done by farmers when facing various problems in farming, such as performing the "Dayango" dance to worship spirits.

## **2. HYBRID CORN SEED**

The development of science and technology has an impact on changes in farming culture in Indonesia, especially in Suka Damai Village, Gorontalo

Regency. The introduction of hybrid seeds by the Gorontalo Provincial Government has changed the orientation of farming that has been carried out for generations, and shifted the use of local corn seeds. At the beginning of the use of hybrid corn seeds, the government introduced the Bisi 2 hybrid corn type, which can produce 2 corn stalks in one corn. With the help of 2 farmers, it seems as if they have the opportunity to get a lot of corn production, and of course it will affect the income of the farming family.

The introduction of hybrid corn is aimed at increasing productivity, utilizing available land, encouraging farmers to be profit-oriented, and meeting foreign market demands. On the other hand, planting hybrid seeds is related to fertilizers, large areas of land, agricultural machinery, pesticides, which require large production costs, and of course burden farmers in rural areas. Facing situations and conditions that require large capital, it is necessary to make rational choices for decision making. Referring to Larson's opinion (Aji purwanto: 70),

Currently, farmers are familiar with various types of hybrid corn seed varieties, including bisi 12, 18, pioneer, NK 212, NK perkasa, NK sumo, HJ 21, Nasa 29, Bima 20. These various brands consist of seeds that are sold freely in the market. in Gorontalo, and government assistance seeds, which aim to increase corn productivity and improve farmers' welfare. The use of hybrid corn seed varieties, has influenced the way of farming in Suka Peace Village, both in terms of land use and use of labor. The existence of hybrid corn seeds has also changed the mindset of farmers who were originally known as subsistence farmers to become profit-seeking farmers. These changes have affected the culture of farmers in everyday life. Farmers become people who adapt to factory products, such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, agricultural machinery, as well as when harvesting, farmers relate to corn storage factories. In addition, hybrid maize varieties have shifted the traditional farming system that uses local varieties, characterized by subsistence, which have been carried out for generations.

The hybrid corn seed variety was first introduced in Suka Damai Village in the 2000s, and the type introduced was bisi 2. An explanation of the bisi 2 variety was conveyed by the Head of Dusun Limu that initially farmers in Suka Damai Village were introduced to bisi 2 hybrid corn seeds, and according to agricultural extension workers 2 seeds in one stalk produce 2 corns. But in reality, one corn stalk is only one fruit and is small because it is not given fertilizer. The difference in reality conveyed by extension workers and the results experienced by farmers, farmers choose to plant local corn again. The lack of use of fertilizers which has an impact on not using hybrid seeds, is a measure that farmers want the appropriate results delivered by agricultural extension workers, in order to pursue large corn production.

The development of science and technology has an impact on the creation of superior varieties of hybrid maize seeds, which will enrich the knowledge of betani in the use of seeds in accordance with their wishes. It is undeniable, and based on reality, hybrid corn varieties consist of various types, which are treated differently from one another. And this difference is experienced by Aba Rami, 89 years old, that planting hybrid corn varieties produces a lot of corn production, as long as it is carried out according to instructions from agricultural extension workers.

Instructions for fertilizing three times, namely the age of 7 days, 21 days, 45 days, will produce large and heavy corn fruit. However, the triple fertilization requires a large amount of money and the availability of fertilizer. The reality of large production costs, This makes most farmers in Suka Damai Village choose a different treatment from the advice from agricultural extension workers. The economic capacity and the requirements to get assistance from the government are obstacles faced by farmers.

Within the last five years, there have been varieties of hybrid corn seeds circulating in the market, namely Bisi 18, Bisi 222, 321, Bisi 322, Bisi 220, NK 212, NK sumo, NK mighty, pioneer, and there is also government assistance, namely HJ 21, Nasa 29, Bimo 20. The many types of hybrid corn varieties mentioned above, require the knowledge of farmers to choose and plant the type according to their wishes. Knowledge of farmers in choosing the type of variety to be used, requires creativity, thoroughness, social networks, to get the advantages and disadvantages of each type of hybrid corn seed. The ability to make choices on one type of variety indicates the knowledge of farmers based on very strict observations and evaluations to avoid losses. For farmers, Growing hybrid corn hopes to get a big profit from corn production, but also avoid crop failures that result in increasing debt to others. The existence of promotions from each sales to influence farmers to use the company's promoted seeds, does not necessarily make farmers use the seeds.

The many types of hybrid corn varieties are directly related to the competition of hybrid corn seed factories, in creating superior seeds that can be accepted by the community. Various ways are used to get farmers to use the products they produce, and with the power of promotion that always says the most superior, and activates skilled people to promote, even through the strengths of government agencies. Government intervention at the beginning of Fadel Mohammad's government by intervening with farmers, can be seen in one of the pillars of Agropolitan, namely providing seeds. The involvement of the government that provides seeds is a benchmark for collaboration with factories that produce hybrid corn seeds, so that the government becomes one of the tools used by seed companies in marketing the company's production.

With the development of farmers' knowledge in selecting seeds, seed companies such as Cargil, PT. Pioner, PT Charoen, PT Monagro Kimia. The multinational private companies mentioned above play a very important role in developing and advancing modern agricultural systems, through the use of hybrid corn seeds. The introduction of various types of hybrid corn seeds can be seen from the many brands of hybrida corn circulating in the market, both those sold directly in traditional markets and those sold in agricultural shops in Gorontalo City. However, the emergence of various brands does not mean that farmers immediately use them, but there is a process of evaluating seeds that have just appeared on the market. This assessment process was carried out by the head of Dusun Suka Damai, that currently many brands of corn have been introduced to farmers such as NK 212, NK Sumo, Mighty NK. But farmers prefer to use seeds that are resistant to disease, heavy seeds, shiny red color, and the cobs are not crushed when shelled. Assessment of the elements mentioned above, indicates the skills and ability of farmers to make

decisions in the selection of seeds to be used. Selection of seeds according to farmers' criteria, as a form of minimizing the risk of crop failure, which has an impact on the loss of opportunities to get more value from agricultural businesses.

In addition to seed selection good hybrid corn, farmers are faced with fertilizers that tend to be scarce when the growing season arrives. The link between seeds and fertilizers is important in hybrid maize cultivation, if one is not available, the farmer will not plant. Unavailability of fertilizer experienced by Mr. Jaka (72 years), that the last planting season did not plant corn because it did not get fertilizer, because to get fertilizer one must meet the requirements for vaccine 1 and vaccine 2. The application of vaccines to get fertilizer requirements has become a new phenomenon in distribution subsidized fertilizer, and for farmers in remote villages, do not understand the health rules imposed by the village government. In this condition of ignorance, farmers become human beings who are in a weak position.

The presence of fertilizers in growing hybrid maize varieties makes the difference between local maize and hybrid maize. The use of fertilizers in growing corn has led farmers to get to know a new culture in the agricultural system. This new culture, of course, automatically makes farmers into changing human beings, but there are local cultural values that are maintained in the modern agricultural system. For farmers, using hybrid corn seeds, still paying attention to the aspect of not wanting to lose, and in making decisions we cannot determine what a farmer will do. Aji's (1998:82) explanation, that our knowledge of the decision made by a farmer to plant one variety of rice in one season, cannot predict that the farmer will do the same thing in the next season. This opinion becomes a benchmark to say that farmers have the freedom to make their choices, according to the situation and conditions they face. Thus, in making decisions, farmers are based on experiences resulting from the learning process.

## **CONCLUSION**

The presence of fertilizers in growing hybrid maize varieties makes the difference between local maize and hybrid maize. The use of fertilizers in growing corn has led farmers to get to know a new culture in the agricultural system. This new culture, of course, automatically makes farmers into changing human beings, but there are local cultural values that are maintained in the modern agricultural system. For farmers, using hybrid corn seeds, still paying attention to the aspect of not wanting to lose, and in making decisions we cannot determine what a farmer will do. This opinion becomes a benchmark to say that farmers have the freedom to make their choices, according to the situation and conditions they face. Thus, in making decisions, farmers are based on experiences resulting from the learning process.

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