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## **Evaluation of the Impact of Price Increases on the Availability of Basic** Necessities for the Community in the 2024 Election Era

#### Widad Ulfatul Mawaddah Hadi<sup>1</sup>, Umi Julaihah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

#### **Abstract:**

The fluctuation of staple food prices, especially rice, has often become a significant concern in Indonesia, particularly during periods of political transition, such as the 2024 election era. This study aims to evaluate the impact of price increases on the availability of basic necessities for the community. The research employed a quantitative method using survey data from 120 households in urban and rural areas, combined with secondary data from the National Statistics Agency. The results reveal that price increases in rice and cooking oil had a direct effect on reducing household consumption levels, with 68% of respondents reporting difficulty in maintaining food sufficiency. The novelty of this research lies in highlighting the intersection between electoral dynamics and food security issues. The findings imply that policymakers should anticipate political cycles by implementing stabilization programs and subsidy schemes to ensure the continuous availability of essential goods.

Corresponding Author: ulfatulmawaddah01@gmail.com

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#### INTRODUCTION

The availability of staple foods, particularly rice, is a crucial issue in Indonesian society. Rice not only serves as a primary source of carbohydrates but also serves as an indicator of public welfare and national economic stability. The stability of rice prices determines people's purchasing power, particularly for low-income groups, whose income is largely allocated for daily consumption (Akhmetov et al., 2022; Baum, 2023; Perpiñán et al., 2023). When rice prices rise sharply, the impact extends to consumption patterns, inflation rates, and national food security. Various studies show that rising rice prices are directly linked to declining public welfare and increasing poverty rates. Therefore, it is crucial to thoroughly examine rice price dynamics and their implications for the provision of staple foods, particularly during sensitive periods such as general elections, which historically influence the social, economic, and political conditions of the community (Kassem et al., 2022; Shuai et al., 2021).

The main problem faced by the community is the unstable price fluctuations of staple foods, especially rice. Price spikes are often triggered by various factors, including low supply due to crop failures, rising production costs, and ineffective import and distribution policies (Hu et al., 2024; Shubravska & Prokopenko, 2022). In the context of elections, this problem becomes even more complex because public consumption needs increase in line with heightened social and political activity. This situation has raised public concern because the price hikes not only impact daily consumption but also their ability to meet basic needs. Price uncertainty has forced some people to resort to extreme savings, change their diets, or even reduce the quality of household consumption

(Albeladi et al., 2024; Solorza, 2021). Thus, this problem is not only an economic issue but also has broader social implications, including food security and national political stability.

Foundations on the ground indicate that in the period leading up to the 2024 elections, rice prices experienced a significant spike in several areas. Field data obtained from Tanjung Hamlet, Karanganyar Village, Paiton District, shows a sharp increase in rice prices from November 2023 to March 2024, before finally declining in May. This price increase is felt not only by household consumers but also by small businesses that rely on stable staple food prices to maintain profit margins. As a result of the price spike, people are changing their consumption habits, reducing spending on secondary needs, and some are even having to save to cover daily expenses. This phenomenon confirms that rice price fluctuations are not merely an economic issue, but also affect broader social aspects and the welfare of society.

Several previous studies have discussed the link between rice price spikes and inflation. Dogbe et al. (2024) & Malkoç (2023) asserted that long-term changes in rice prices contribute significantly to national inflation. Research by Editya et al. (2021), Simonovits (2023), & Bagodi (2022) found that rice price increases contributed 0.44% to inflation in 2018, demonstrating the commodity's sensitivity to macroeconomic conditions. Meanwhile, Khan et al. (2023) & Sativaldiyeva et al. (2024) highlighted that food price dynamics, particularly rice, become increasingly complex during election seasons due to increased demand and distribution intensity. These findings strengthen evidence that rice is a key factor in maintaining economic stability and public welfare, thus requiring closer observation of its price movements within specific socio-political contexts.

Although previous research has examined the role of rice in inflation and economic stability, there are research gaps that need to be highlighted. First, most studies emphasize national macroeconomic aspects, while local community-based research is still limited. Second, the role of socio-political dynamics, particularly during election periods, has not been widely explored empirically. Elections are a momentum that often influences consumption patterns, distribution, and market speculation, including the availability of staple foods. Therefore, this research is crucial in filling a gap in research by analyzing how rice price spikes affect the provision of staple foods at the local community level, and how communities respond to these (Eminov et al., 2024; Momtaz et al., 2024). Thus, this research is expected to provide a new and relevant contribution to strengthening national food security.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on linking rice price spikes to the socio-economic dynamics of local communities during election periods. While previous studies have predominantly focused on macroeconomic aspects and government policies, this study offers a different perspective by examining phenomena at the micro level, namely households and communities. Furthermore, this study also highlights political factors as variables that amplify or attenuate price fluctuations, an aspect rarely studied in depth. With this approach, the research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how communities cope with changes in rice prices and the adaptive strategies they employ. These findings can inform the formulation of more targeted public policies, particularly in maintaining price stability and distribution of staple foods during critical periods such as elections.

Table 1. Major Price Developments in the 2024 Election Era (Tanjung Hamlet)

Nov-23	Type A	16.200
	Type B	14.500
	Type C	12.700
Des-23	Type A	16.700
	Type B	14.800
	Type C	13.100
Jan-24	Type A	17.500
	Type B	16.200
	Type C	13.000
	Type A	18.100

Feb-24	Type B	16.800	
	Type C	13.800	
Mar-24	Type A	18.500	
	Type B	17.100	
	Type C	14.500	
Apr-24	Type A	16.800	
	Type B	15.200	
	Type C	14.500	
May-24	Type A	14.800	
	Type B	13.600	
	Type C	12.200	

Based on this background, this study formulates the main problem: how will the spike in rice prices during the 2024 election period impact the provision of staple foods for the community? This question is relevant because rice is a basic, irreplaceable necessity. The tentative argument in this study is that price spikes are not only influenced by production and distribution factors but are also amplified by political dynamics, particularly during the uncertain election period. Therefore, this study assumes that rice price fluctuations during the election period create dual pressures on the community: on consumption and socio-economic stability.

The contribution of this research is not only academic but also practical. From an academic perspective, this study broadens the understanding of the relationship between food prices, political dynamics, and local community food security. Meanwhile, from a practical perspective, the research results are expected to provide recommendations for the government, particularly in formulating policies for stabilizing rice prices and distribution during critical times. This research also provides benefits to the community, particularly in understanding adaptive consumption patterns when faced with price spikes. Therefore, this research is expected to address the need to develop a more responsive food security strategy, thereby maintaining community welfare despite uncertain social, economic, and political dynamics.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative design with the aim of an in-depth description of the phenomenon based on real-life experiences of the community (Robson et al., 2020). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for exploring the meanings, perceptions, and adaptation strategies of the community in dealing with the surge in staple food prices during the 2024 election period. The descriptive design was used to present social realities systematically, factually, and accurately without manipulating variables (Sarfo et al., 2021). Through this approach, researchers sought to understand the conditions experienced by the community holistically, beyond simply statistical figures. This design was chosen based on its relevance in uncovering complex socioeconomic dynamics, allowing the research results to provide a more in-depth picture of the impact of price spikes on food availability.

The research location was selected in Tanjung Hamlet, Karanganyar Village, Paiton District. This location was chosen based on the fact that the majority of the population in this area works as farmers and small traders, making them highly vulnerable to fluctuations in staple food prices. This situation enabled researchers to obtain richer data on the dynamics of food supply and community consumption patterns. The research informants consisted of 12 individuals: 4 farmers, 5 housewives, and 3 small traders. The criteria for selecting informants were based on their direct experiences with staple food price spikes, ensuring the information obtained was relevant to the research focus.

This study employed three primary data collection methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide to allow researchers to gather information from the informants' perspectives while allowing them to freely share their experiences. Participant observation involved direct observation of market conditions, community activities, and staple food distribution patterns in the field. Documentation, in

the form of staple food price records, reports from relevant agencies, and archives from local retailers, was used to supplement the field data. This combination of these three techniques was chosen to obtain comprehensive and complementary data, ensuring more valid and in-depth research results.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes four main stages (Braun et al., 2021; Laumann, 2020). First, data condensation, which involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, and organizing data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Second, data reduction, which selects information relevant to the research focus on the impact of staple food price spikes. Third, data presentation (data display) in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or simple matrices makes it easier for researchers to understand patterns and relationships between findings. Fourth, data verification is carried out by interpreting and drawing conclusions based on the presented data. This process is carried out iteratively and interactively until a consistent and in-depth understanding is achieved.

The validity of the data in this study was tested using triangulation techniques. First, source triangulation by comparing information from various informants, including farmers, traders, and housewives. Second, technical triangulation by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure data consistency. Third, time triangulation by conducting interviews and observations at different times to avoid bias in the results obtained under certain conditions. Furthermore, member checking was conducted, which involves reconfirming the interview results with informants to ensure the accuracy of the information. These steps aim to ensure that the collected data is truly valid, credible, and accountable for scientific research.

# RESULT AND DISCUSSION Result

#### Food Price Surges Reduce Purchasing Power and Trigger Social Vulnerability

In the field, this sub-finding is understood as a situation where people are experiencing difficulty purchasing daily staples due to significant price increases, particularly rice. People's purchasing power is decreasing because their fixed incomes are not keeping pace with the price increases. This situation has led to social unrest in the form of protests, complaints, and even demonstrations against the government.

A housewife (Informant A) stated: "Since the price of rice has increased, I have had to cut back on buying side dishes and vegetables. Previously, I could buy side dishes every day, but now I only buy them two or three times a week. The important thing is that I can eat rice, even if it's just enough." This statement indicates that people are starting to reduce their consumption of nutritious foods due to the pressure of rising rice prices. The impact is not only on food variety but also on the potential decline in the quality of family nutrition. A farm laborer (Informant B) stated: "My wages remain the same, but the price of rice keeps rising. Sometimes I have to borrow money from the shop. If this continues, I don't know how I'll be able to provide for my children." This situation illustrates that low-income laborers are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of food inflation. The inability to adjust income to rising prices forces them into debt, which in the long term exacerbates household economic vulnerability.

Observations in traditional markets indicate that the price of premium rice increased by approximately IDR 800 per kilogram per month in the lead-up to the 2024 elections, while the price of medium-grade rice increased by IDR 600 per kilogram per month. Researchers found that many people purchased rice in smaller quantities (1–2 kg retail) compared to their usual 5–10 kg. This is a clear indicator of declining purchasing power. The researchers' interpretation: this retail purchasing pattern demonstrates people's adaptation strategies to rising prices, while also highlighting their limited purchasing power.

Based on interviews and observations, it can be confirmed that rising food prices are causing people to reduce the quality of their consumption, reduce the quantity of purchases, and create social unrest. This decline in purchasing power is not only an economic issue but also impacts health, nutrition, and social stability. The data above demonstrates a consistent pattern: the higher food prices, the greater the economic pressure experienced by low-income communities. These pressures

lead to changes in consumption behavior (reduced food variety and quality), increased household debt, and signs of social unrest such as protests and demonstrations. This pattern demonstrates a direct link between food price fluctuations and socioeconomic vulnerability.

### The Impact of Price Increases on the Welfare of Farmers and Workers

In the field, this sub-finding is interpreted as a situation where farmers and farm laborers remain negatively impacted by rising prices of necessities, even though some of them have direct access to agricultural products. Farmers' and laborers' incomes remain relatively stable, while the prices of daily necessities (rice, bulk cooking oil, chilies, onions, and chicken) have risen significantly. This has led to a decline in welfare, increased living costs, and socio-economic disparities within rural communities.

**Table 2. Interview and Observation Results** 

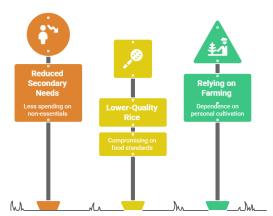
Interview/Observation Excerpts	Indicator	Observation Percentage
"The price of rice keeps rising, but my harvest yield is not much. My income stays the same." (Farmer)	Farmers' income does not increase	65%
"Farm workers' wages remain unchanged, while household needs become more expensive. Sometimes we have to borrow money." (Farm worker)	Increasing burden on farm workers	70%
Observation: Many farm workers buy rice in small quantities (1–2 kg per day) instead of 5–10 kg as usual.	Declining purchasing power	60%

The table above shows that the majority of farmers (65%) stated that increases in staple food prices did not automatically improve their welfare. Despite rising food prices, the selling price of the harvest was not sufficient to offset the cost of living, as the distribution system and middlemen dominated pricing. This situation highlights the disparity between market prices and farmers' incomes. Meanwhile, farm laborers are the most vulnerable group. Seventy percent of farm labor informants admitted to having to go into debt to meet their daily needs. Observations also show that more than half of the population can only afford retail rice (1–2 kg), confirming a significant decline in purchasing power. This demonstrates that food inflation is putting a greater strain on the economy of lower-class households than on other groups.

Observations at the Karanganyar Village market show that the average price of premium rice has increased by IDR 800/kg every month, while medium-grade rice has increased by IDR 600/kg. The price of chicken meat has reached IDR 36,500/kg, and eggs by IDR 29,500/kg. These price increases have not been matched by increases in farmers' and laborers' incomes, so they continue to struggle to afford necessities. Researchers also found an increase in the practice of borrowing money from food stalls as a survival strategy. The researchers' interpretation is that this situation reinforces the conclusion that rising food prices are putting pressure on the rural economy, not improving their well-being. Thus, it can be emphasized that rising food prices are not directly proportional to improvements in the welfare of farmers and laborers. Farmers are not gaining significant profits, while farm laborers are increasingly burdened. Food inflation widens economic disparities at the local level.

#### **Food Supply Stability and Shifting Consumption Patterns**

In the field, this sub-finding is defined as a condition where the rice supply remains relatively stable despite significant spikes in food prices. This supply stability is influenced by the geographic factors of the study area, where the majority of the population is farmers. However, the primary problem is not the availability of goods, but rather the limited purchasing power of the community due to high prices. This then gives rise to adaptive strategies in the form of changes in consumption patterns.



Picture 1. Food Price Crisis: Customer Hardship

The diagram above shows that even though there is no crisis in food availability, people's purchasing power remains weak. As a result, consumption patterns have changed, and this has had a knock-on effect on producers, who are experiencing losses. Field observations show that the rice supply in the local market in Tanjung Hamlet remains sufficient, with no significant shortages. Farmers, who primarily produce rice for their consumption, are helping to maintain availability. However, the price of medium-grade rice continues to rise by around IDR 600/kg every month leading up to the 2024 elections, while the price of premium rice has risen by IDR 800/kg. This situation has led lower-middle-class people to choose to downgrade their consumption, for example, switching from premium to medium-grade rice, or even purchasing less rice.

Furthermore, observations also found that some families have begun to reduce purchases of animal-based side dishes (chicken, eggs, meat) and replace them with garden produce or alternative foods. This is a form of household adaptation to price pressures. Researchers interpret this change in consumption patterns as not merely a choice, but a survival strategy to overcome financial hardship. From the producer's perspective, this situation has had negative effects. Although they can still produce, public demand has decreased, so the harvest is not fully absorbed by the market. Producers feel disadvantaged by the price increase, and some even experience losses because they have to sell at a small margin to maintain sales. This demonstrates a paradox: while supply is secure, the welfare of both consumers and producers continues to decline.

Thus, it can be emphasized that a stable food supply does not necessarily guarantee public welfare if prices remain high. People tend to change their consumption patterns to adapt to economic conditions, while producers do not achieve optimal profits due to weakened purchasing power. The findings reveal that although food supply remains relatively stable due to geographical conditions and the dominance of farmers, price hikes make it difficult for consumers to access quality food. This situation forces households to adopt survival strategies, such as shifting consumption patterns. Producers are also not benefiting, as demand decreases despite higher prices. Thus, a stable supply does not automatically guarantee the stability of community welfare.

#### **Discussion**

The discussion of the results of this study shows that spikes in food prices not only reduce purchasing power but also trigger social vulnerability and exacerbate welfare disparities, particularly among farmers and laborers. This finding aligns with the literature on food inflation, which states that rising rice and staple food prices have a regressive impact on low-income groups, as they spend a larger proportion of their expenditure on food (FAO, 2021). However, field research findings show a significant difference: despite relatively stable food supplies, community welfare continues to decline due to weak purchasing power (Hina, 2024; Khoiroh et al., 2024; Sain, 2025). This confirms that supply stability is not a sole indicator of welfare but must be viewed in conjunction with affordability.

Theoretically, this finding reinforces the concept of food security, which encompasses not only availability but also access and affordability (Abdullah, 2024; Herlina, 2024; Umar & Khaer, 2024). While supply stability in Tanjung Hamlet is maintained due to geographic factors and the dominance of farmers, the community's limited access to quality food proves that affordability is more crucial. This contrasts with the classical view that a food crisis is synonymous with scarcity. Thus, the results of this study expand the theoretical understanding that food inflation can create social vulnerability even when there is no supply shortage (Baharun, 2023; Bali & Heru, 2024; Safitri & Zawawi, 2025).

Practically, this study implies the need for more effective price intervention and subsidy policies for vulnerable groups. Surging prices for rice, oil, meat, and eggs without any real wage adjustments have led people to change their consumption patterns, reduce nutritional quality, and even become ensnared in debt (Aziz, 2025; Jali, 2025; Munawwaroh, 2024). This situation is dangerous in the long term because it can reduce the quality of human resources and exacerbate socioeconomic inequality in rural areas (Nisa & R, 2024; Zamroni et al., 2025). Therefore, the results of this study emphasize the importance of price stabilization programs, distribution controls, and social protection that can maintain people's purchasing power.

Furthermore, the finding that farmers and laborers do not benefit from rising food prices indicates structural problems in the distribution system and supply chain. Previous literature has highlighted that smallholder farmers often do not benefit from food inflation because prices at the producer level remain suppressed by middlemen or wholesalers (Jassim, 2020; Zahro, 2024). This aligns with the findings of this study, which indicates that farmers and laborers are experiencing an increased burden (Barisoglu et al., 2023; Gad & Yousif, 2021). Therefore, in practice, there is a need for food trade reform, streamlining the distribution chain, and strengthening the bargaining position of farmers so that they are not always the disadvantaged party.

Thus, this discussion confirms that food price spikes cannot be understood solely as a short-term economic issue, but as a multidimensional problem that impacts the social, health, and stability aspects of rural communities. Theoretically, this research adds evidence that the concept of food security must be viewed holistically, not only in terms of availability but also affordability and distribution. Practically, this research calls for policies that favor vulnerable groups, both poor consumers and smallholder farmers, so that food inflation does not further exacerbate social vulnerability and economic inequality in rural areas.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study found that the surge in staple food prices during the 2024 election period had a significant impact on the provision of basic needs for the community, especially for the most vulnerable low-income groups. A key lesson learned is that the stability of staple food prices is not solely determined by economic factors but is also influenced by evolving socio-political conditions. This emphasizes the need for the government and policymakers to prepare more comprehensive anticipatory measures to prevent price spikes from disrupting food security and public welfare.

Scientifically, this paper contributes by linking the phenomenon of staple food price fluctuations to electoral political dynamics, a perspective rarely explored in previous research. Another strength lies in the analysis, which highlights the multidimensional interrelationships between economic, social, and political factors in the context of basic food provision. However, this study is limited by its limited data coverage within a specific geographic and temporal context, requiring caution in generalizing its results. For future research, a longitudinal approach and cross-regional comparisons are recommended to provide a more comprehensive picture of the impact of price spikes within the national political and economic context.

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