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Increasing the Economic Independence of Women Farm Workers through Entrepreneurship Training

Fitriliana^{1*}, Nasir², Filia Hanum³, Ilyas⁴, Marlina⁵

¹Universitas Serambi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, fitriliana@serambimekkah.ac.id

²Universitas Serambi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, nasir@serambimekkah.ac.id

³Universitas Serambi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, filiahanum@serambimekkah.ac.id

⁴Universitas Serambi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, ilyas@serambimekkah.ac.id

⁵Universitas Serambi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, marlinabahri@serambimekkah.ac.id

*Corresponding Author: fitriliana@serambimekkah.ac.id¹

Abstract: This research aims to increase the economic independence of women farm workers through targeted and applicable entrepreneurship training. The background of this research is based on the low level of income and business skills among female farm workers, which has an impact on their limitations in meeting the economic needs of their families. The method used is a participatory approach with the stages of identifying needs, preparing training materials, implementing training, and evaluating results. The training is focused on developing production skills, business management, marketing, and simple financial management. The results of the study showed that the trainees experienced an increase in knowledge, skills, and motivation to be entrepreneurial. In addition, some participants began to practice the skills acquired to build a small business that contributes to the family's income. These findings indicate that entrepreneurship training can be an effective strategy in increasing the economic independence of women farm workers, while strengthening their role in rural economic development.

Keywords: Economic Independence, Farm Labour, Women, Training, Entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

Many economically powerless communities are found in rural areas, and powerlessness is caused by several factors including lack of economic security, experience, access to information, financial support, training and physical and emotional tension (1-Haris ATE). Women who work as farm laborers often face various structural and social challenges, both in terms of economy, access to education, and limitations in obtaining opportunities for self-development. In the agricultural sector, they generally occupy low positions with minimal wages and without adequate job security. This condition causes the level of economic independence of women farm workers to be very limited, so there is a risk of prolonging the cycle of poverty in their families and communities.

Economic independence is an important aspect of women's empowerment. One strategic approach to achieve this is through entrepreneurship training. This training not only provides practical knowledge and skills, but also builds confidence, innovation, and the ability to manage a business independently. With targeted entrepreneurship training, women farm workers can develop alternative income outside the agricultural sector, or even create added value from the agricultural products themselves (2-Hastuti). Therefore, entrepreneurship training programs for women farm workers are very relevant in an effort to increase their economic independence. Through a participatory and contextual approach, it is hoped that this training will be able to open up new sustainable economic opportunities, strengthen the position of women in households and communities, and encourage the creation of gender justice in the rural economic sector.

Economic Independence

1. Definition of Economic Independence

Economic independence is the ability of an individual, group, or community to meet their living needs independently, sustainably and without relying entirely on outside assistance. According to Todaro & Smith (2011), economic independence includes the ability to manage resources, make economic decisions, and be responsible for the consequences for the sake of sustainable welfare.

2. Characteristics of Economic Independence

According to Suryana (2013), economically independent individuals or groups have the following characteristics:

- a. Able to meet basic needs without dependence on external assistance.
- b. Have a stable income and diverse sources of income.
- c. Have the skills and knowledge to manage a business or work.
- d. Dare to make a rational economic decision.
- e. Able to adapt to market changes or economic conditions.

3. Components of Economic Independence

Based on the concept of Chambers & Conway (1992) about *sustainable livelihood*, economic independence is supported by several things, namely:

- a. Human *capital*: skills, knowledge, health.
- b. Social *capital*: networks, relationships, and social support.
- c. Physical assets: equipment, technology, infrastructure.
- d. Financial assets (*financial capital*): savings, capital, income.
- e. Natural *capital*: land, water, natural resources.

4. Factors influencing economic independence

According to Amartya Sen (1999) in *Development as Freedom*, it is explained that:

- a. Education and skills are to increase productivity.
- b. Access to capital and markets is to facilitate production and distribution.
- c. Government policies are in the form of regulatory support, subsidies and protection.
- d. Local culture and values that influence work patterns and consumption.
- e. Environmental conditions are in the form of sustainable natural resource availability.

5. Indicators of economic independence

Referring to the *United Nations Development Programme* UNDP (2016) or the United Nations Development Programme, indicators that can be used include:

- a. Per capita income level.
- b. Dependency to aid ratio.
- c. The level of participation in economic activities.
- d. Diversification of revenue sources.
- e. Sustainability of business or work.

6. Relevance in community empowerment

In the context of empowerment, economic independence is the ultimate goal of various capacity building programs, such as entrepreneurship training, access to business capital, or strengthening marketing networks. According to *the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)* and the *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)* in 2019, it is emphasized that economic independence, especially for women, contributes to the increase of bargaining positions in families and communities.

Farm Workers

1. Definition of Farm Labor

- a. Farm laborers are workers who carry out agricultural activities on other people's land by receiving wages in the form of money, crops, or other rewards.
- b. According to Mubyarto (1994), farm workers are workers in the agricultural sector who do not own their own land or have very narrow land, so they depend on the sale of labor on land owned by others.
- c. Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower defines a laborer/worker as any person who works and receives wages or other forms of rewards from the employer. In the context of agriculture, farm workers include seasonal and freelance daily workers.

2. Types of Farm Workers

According to Soetrisno (2001), farm workers can be distinguished into:

- a. Permanent farm workers → work continuously for landowners with a fixed salary system or long-term contracts.
- b. Farm workers are not fixed/seasonal → work at certain times according to the planting or harvest season.
- c. Freelance daily farm workers → be paid per working day according to the agreement.

3. Characteristics of Farm Workers

Based on Ellis' (1993) study on rural economics, farm workers usually:

- a. Not owning or owning a very narrow land.
- b. Have limited capital for their own farming business.
- c. Depends on daily/seasonal wages.
- d. Susceptible to seasonal fluctuations and market prices.
- e. Access to education and training is generally low.

4. Factors Affecting the Life of Farm Workers

According to Tjondronegoro (1984), the condition of farm workers is influenced by:

- a. The more unequal the distribution of land →, the more farm laborers.
- b. The wage system can → be daily, wholesale, or profit-sharing.
- c. The season and weather → affect the availability of jobs.
- d. Access to capital and technology → low access makes it difficult for farm workers to increase productivity.
- e. Government policies → subsidy programs, agrarian reform, or training can affect their well-being.

5. Theoretical Perspective

Some theories are relevant to understanding farm labor:

- a. The theory of Economic Dualism (*Boeke, 1953*) → the traditional sector (subsistence agriculture) and the modern sector (industry) go hand in hand; farm workers are in the traditional sector with low productivity.
- b. Dependency Theory (*Frank, 1967*) → dependence on capital/land owners makes it difficult for farm workers to be independent.

- c. Social Welfare Theory (*Titmuss, 1974*) → the welfare of farm workers needs public policy intervention to overcome structural poverty.

Woman

In an effort to increase the economic independence of women farm workers, it is important to first understand the positions, roles, and challenges faced by women in socio-economic life, especially in the agricultural sector. Women not only play a role as workers in production activities, but also as household managers who support the family's economic sustainability. However, reality shows that women farm workers often face limited access to education, skills, and economic resources, so that their position is often marginalized.

Therefore, a number of studies and theories on women, empowerment, and economic independence are important bases for examining empowerment strategies through entrepreneurship training. This reference to women provides an overview of how women's involvement in training and business development can strengthen their capacity, increase income, and realize more sustainable economic independence.

Training

Training is a systematic process to improve a person's knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to be able to carry out tasks or work better. In other words, training is a form of non-formal education that focuses on practice and skills so that participants can directly apply them in their daily lives or work. Furthermore, according to Wibowo (2017: 370), training and development are important organizational investments in human resources. Training involves human resources to gain knowledge and learning skills so that they will soon be able to use them on the job. Basically, training is necessary because there is a gap between the skills of the current worker and the skills needed to occupy a new position.

The characteristics of the training include:

1. Practical – more emphasis on skills than theory.
2. Targeted – having a clear goal, such as increasing productivity, independence, or work quality.
3. Time-limited – usually done within a specific period (daily, weekly, or monthly).
4. Delivered by instructors/experts – there is a facilitator guiding the participants.
5. Results can be measured – for example, changes in skills, attitudes, or performance improvements.

Examples of training are as follows:

1. Entrepreneurship training for women farm workers to increase economic independence.
2. Computer training for students to be proficient in using office applications.
3. Motorcycle service training for youth to be ready to work or open a workshop business.

Wibowo (2017: 375) further explained that there are differences in training and education, namely:

1. Education
 - a. Nature: General, comprehensive, more theory.
 - b. Objective: To develop thinking skills, knowledge, attitudes, and character broadly.
 - c. Time: Long-term (e.g. school or college).
 - d. Results: Graduates who have a broad knowledge base, are not necessarily able to be put into practice immediately.
 - e. Example: Formal education in school or college.
2. Training
 - a. Nature: Practical, focus on specific skills.

- b. Objective: Improve work skills/skills that can be applied immediately.
- c. Time: Relatively short (days, weeks, months).
- d. Results: Participants were able to master specific skills.
- e. Examples: Sewing training, entrepreneurship training, computer training.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a process of creating, developing, and managing new businesses with the aim of generating added value, either in the form of economic benefits, job creation, or contributing to society. Entrepreneurship is not only limited to establishing a business, but also involves an innovative, creative attitude, daring to take risks and the ability to see opportunities that have not been utilized.

In general, entrepreneurship can be seen as:

- 1. Process – because it involves stages from idea to sustainable venture.
- 2. Attitude/soul – namely courage, innovation, and tenacity in facing challenges.
- 3. Results – in the form of new business creation, employment, and economic and social added value.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth the entrepreneurial training process and its impact on increasing the economic independence of women farm workers. This approach was chosen because it is able to comprehensively describe the social realities, experiences, and changes experienced by the subject.

Research Location and Time

The research was carried out in Blang Bintang District, Aceh Besar Regency, which is an area with the majority of the population earning a livelihood as farmers and farm laborers.

Research Subject

The subjects in this study are women who work as farm laborers and have participated in entrepreneurship training organized by the Faculty of Economics, Serambi University of Mecca. The informant selection technique was carried out by *purposive sampling*, namely by selecting informants who were considered to have relevant information according to the purpose of the research.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques are carried out through:

- 1. In-depth interviews with female farm workers, training participants, and training organizers.
- 2. Participatory observation, to directly observe business activities carried out after training.
- 3. Documentation, in the form of photos, activity notes, and documents related to entrepreneurship training.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained was analyzed qualitatively using an interactive analysis method which included three stages, namely:

- 1. Data reduction: filtering important data that fits the focus of the research,
- 2. Data presentation: compiling data in the form of a descriptive narrative,
- 3. Conclusions/verification: formulating findings and meanings from the data obtained.

Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation techniques are carried out, namely comparing data from various sources and data collection techniques, as well as validating informants regarding the interpretation of interview results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Entrepreneurship Training

The entrepreneurship training provided to women farm workers includes several basic materials, such as business planning, simple financial management, marketing of local products, and practical skills training (such as processing agricultural products into value-added products). The training was conducted for four weeks intensively, with a participatory approach and hands-on practice.

The participants showed high enthusiasm in participating in the training. Most of them admitted that they were just getting knowledge about entrepreneurship for the first time. In addition, the presence of female facilitators who understand the local context also increases the comfort of participants in discussing and asking questions.

Changes in Attitudes and Knowledge

After participating in the training, there was a significant increase in basic knowledge of entrepreneurship in the participants. They begin to understand the importance of financial record-keeping, product promotion, and capital management. In addition, there is a change in attitude, such as increased confidence, courage to try new businesses, and willingness to be economically independent. Some participants also began to convey innovative ideas, such as producing chips from local agricultural products, making organic fertilizers from agricultural waste, and selling their products through social media.

Impact on Economic Independence

The initial impact of the training shows that some women farm workers start running small businesses in between their working hours as farm workers. Although the scale of the business is still small, the additional income from this entrepreneurial proceeds helps them meet their household needs without having to rely entirely on wages as farm laborers.

Some of the indicators of economic independence that are starting to be seen include:

1. Ability to manage business and household finances independently
2. Increased contribution to family economic decision-making
3. Ability to market your own products without relying on others
4. The formation of small business groups based on the women's community

Challenges Faced

However, the training that has been obtained also faces several challenges. Among them are limited initial capital for them to start a business, limited market access, and limited free time because most of the time women farm workers are used to work in fields and rice fields. In addition, there are still social and cultural barriers that consider that women should only focus on domestic work such as taking care of their families.

Discussion

The results of the study show that entrepreneurship training has great potential in increasing the economic independence of women farm workers. These findings are in line with empowerment theory that emphasizes the importance of increasing the capacity of individuals and groups in accessing economic resources. (Wayan N)

Theoretically, this training supports the *empowerment* framework developed by Kabeer (1999), which includes access to resources, increased ability to make strategic choices, and

control over one's own economic life. In the local context, interventions like this are particularly relevant because they can provide practical and contextual solutions to the economic limitations faced by women in the informal sector.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that entrepreneurship training has an important role in increasing the economic independence of women farm workers. This training not only provides basic knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship, but also builds confidence and motivation to start an independent business.

The trainees showed positive changes in terms of entrepreneurial knowledge, financial management, and the ability to create and develop products of economic value. Despite facing various obstacles such as limited capital and market access, some women farm workers have started small businesses that provide additional income for their families.

Thus, entrepreneurship training has proven to be one of the effective strategies in empowering women farm workers, expanding economic opportunities, and encouraging the realization of more sustainable economic independence among village women.

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