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Empowering Women for a Prosperous Household: Amplifying Family Income through Economic Empowerment

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Empowering Women for a Prosperous Household: Amplifying Family Income through Economic Empowerment

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Abstract

Presented as a case study, this qualitative inquiry seeks to provide an overview of the outcomes of the Ecoprint business-driven women's economic empowerment program in Metro City. This study delves into the pivotal role of women's economic empowerment in augmenting household income and overall prosperity. Data collection encompassed interviews, observations, and documentation, facilitated by non-test instruments such as interview, observation, and documentation guidelines. The collected data underwent qualitative descriptive analysis, enhanced by source triangulation for validity. This analytical process involved data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show how the women's economic empowerment program transforms housewives from home-bound roles to empowered women contributing to family finances through skills like crafting Ecoprint and Shibori fabrics. This shift results in heightened family income. This research underscores the potential for empowering housewives to uplift family economies, underscoring the significance of such opportunities for improved household prosperity.

Keywords: Empowering Women, Economic Empowerment, Housewives.

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INTRODUCTION

Misconceptions about gender stem from society's portrayal of women as a fragile and limited demographic, primarily suited for domestic tasks [1]. Essentially, women are often confined to household duties, while men are depicted as superior entities who take on significant roles in non-domestic fields [2]. This cognitive construction underpins patriarchy, firmly instilling the notion of female inferiority beneath male dominance [3]. Consequently, women face barriers that hinder their advancement in professions equivalent to men, even in terms of financial contributions to the family. Historically, patriarchy has placed women in subordinate positions, disregarding their abilities and potential beyond the domestic sphere [4]. This not only affects individual perceptions of gender roles but also creates social structures that systematically restrain women from achieving higher accomplishments and equal recognition. For example, in education, women often do not receive the same opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge due to the belief that higher education is unnecessary for those expected to spend most of their lives at home [5].

Moreover, in the workplace, women frequently encounter gender discrimination that prevents them from attaining leadership positions or receiving equal pay for the same work as men [6]. This injustice is exacerbated by stereotypes portraying women as less competent or unsuitable for roles that demand high levels of leadership and responsibility. As a result, despite significantly contributing to the family's and society's economy, women's contributions often go unrecognized or underappreciated [7]. Addressing these misconceptions requires a collective and systematic effort to reshape social constructs about gender [8]. Gender-inclusive and sensitive education should be implemented from an early age, with a curriculum emphasizing equality and valuing women's roles and contributions. In the workplace, policies that support gender equality, such as equal pay and fair promotion opportunities, must be strictly enforced [9].

Additionally, the media plays a crucial role in shaping society's perceptions of gender. More equitable and diverse representation of women in the media can help change negative stereotypes and encourage society to value and acknowledge women's contributions in all fields [10]. Society must be encouraged to appreciate and recognize women's contributions in all areas and support their empowerment to reach their full potential without gender barriers. The participation of both genders in fulfilling domestic needs holds significant importance. Women's contributions to household responsibilities are just as important as men's. Therefore, women have the same rights to participate in maintaining household welfare [11]. However, in the professional realm, women often face wage disparities compared to men. This imbalance arises due to the common perception that women are inferior, have lower education, and limited ability to contribute financially to the family unit [12].

Equal participation in domestic affairs not only enhances household welfare but also promotes gender equality [13]. In a balanced household environment, responsibilities and chores are shared fairly between men and women, allowing both parties to feel valued and equal [14]. However, deep-rooted stereotypes and discrimination in society often lead to women being overlooked in the workplace. Despite demonstrating equal capabilities and qualifications, women still receive lower salaries compared to their male counterparts for the same jobs (Kuncoro and Kadar, 2016). This reflects systemic injustice that needs to be addressed to achieve true gender equality (Allen, et al., 2021). Stronger efforts are needed to

change these perceptions and ensure that women receive equal opportunities and recognition in the workplace [17]. Equal education and fair workplace policies must be implemented to reduce wage gaps and promote an inclusive work environment. These measures include ensuring that recruitment and promotion processes are based on meritocracy and not gender bias. Additionally, companies and organizations need to create policies that support work-life balance, such as fair parental leave for both parents and flexible work arrangements (Allen, et al., 2021).

The essence of forming a family is to achieve holistic well-being spanning physical, social, economic, psychological, and spiritual facets. Optimal family welfare thrives on collaborative efforts from all members [18]. Despite traditional gender roles designating men as earners and women as domestic caregivers, women can contribute significantly to family finances if given the chance. Research involving 343 working women respondents, encompassing both mothers and non-mothers, revealed that those women who balanced both work and motherhood experienced heightened levels of life contentment. These findings indicate that women possess the capacity to effectively embrace and excel in diverse roles, showcasing their ability to contribute significantly to the family's financial well-being.

Ecoprint fabric has become a highly favored textile choice in the bustling urban landscape of Metro Lampung City. Over time, the local batik craft in Metro City has evolved to include a variety of patterns, ranging from traditional Javanese batik to innovative designs such as splash batik, ecoprint, shibori, and more. The rapidly growing creative batik industry has developed over a long period in Metro City [19]. The production and promotion of ecoprint and shibori hold substantial market potential for artisans and serve as a driver of economic growth in Metro City. The ecoprint and shibori businesses in Metro City can stimulate economic growth by promoting their unique products both locally and beyond the region [20]. Maintaining these local cultural practices through training empowers women, particularly housewives, contributing to cultural heritage and family welfare. The skills and knowledge gained from such training can help women create additional sources of income, enhancing their economic independence and the overall financial stability of their households [21]. This empowerment not only preserves the traditional craftsmanship but also promotes sustainable economic development within the community [22].

Imopuro Village, located in Metro Pusat District, is predominantly inhabited by people working as farmers, carpenters, laborers, or service workers. The limited awareness of the value of dual income within families has resulted in a lower economic status for the majority of the village's residents. Women in this village primarily focus on household chores and childcare, making the family's financial well-being entirely dependent on the husband's income. This situation creates a high economic dependency on men and limits the potential financial contribution of women. This qualitative study aims to demonstrate how the women's empowerment program in Imopuro Village, located in Metro Lampung, contributes to improving family welfare. The empowerment program is designed to provide skills and economic opportunities for women, enabling them to participate more actively in increasing the family's income. Through skills training, access to business capital, and community support, the program aims to reduce economic dependency on a single income source and strengthen the family's financial stability.

METHODS

This research is field research conducted through interviews, documentation, and various other methods to obtain primary data directly [23]. The aim of this research is to study and understand attitudes, views, and behaviors related to women's economic empowerment. Additionally, this research falls under the category of qualitative research, focusing on detailed descriptions of phenomena occurring in the field [24]. The research object is Women's Economic Empowerment to Increase Family Income, with a Case Study of Ecoprint and Shibori Businesses at Ecoprint and Shibori Godong Asri Metro City. A qualitative approach is chosen because this research seeks to explain or describe in-depth the actual conditions in the field through rich and detailed data collection [25].

Primary data sources were obtained through in-depth interviews with Mrs. Tri Nafsiati, the business owner, and five workers at Ecoprint and Shibori Godong Asri Metro City. Additionally, interviews were conducted with the owner of Ecoprint and Shibori Godong Asri Metro City to gain a more comprehensive perspective. Secondary data sources are data obtained indirectly from primary sources. These secondary data are sourced from various written works, books, journals, and other publications related to Women's Economic Empowerment to Increase Family Income. In this research, the analysis technique used is the qualitative field analysis method. Data were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation conducted directly with business owners regarding women's empowerment in improving family welfare. This qualitative data analysis is inductive, starting from specific facts that are then analyzed in-depth, eventually leading to the discovery of general hypotheses that describe the phenomena being studied.

By using this approach, the research is expected to provide a clear and comprehensive picture of how women's economic empowerment through Ecoprint and Shibori businesses can contribute to increasing family income and community welfare in Metro City [26]. This research is also expected to contribute to the development of theories and practices of women's economic empowerment in various other contexts.

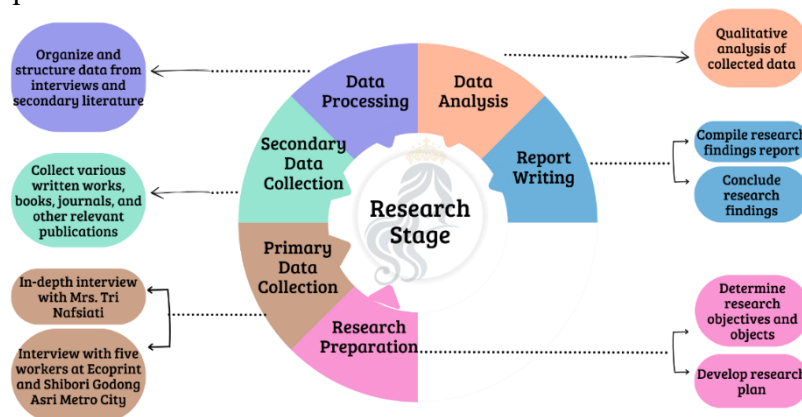


Figure 1. Flow of research methods

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Ecoprint and Shibori business operates as a proactive effort to enhance the status of women in society. The prevailing dynamics, such as the concentration of housewives on family responsibilities, often lead to dependency on their partners. This underscores the importance of exploring latent potential and developing skills among housewives, fostering independence and

the ability to contribute significantly to household income. The Ecoprint and Shibori business is an essential component of a women's empowerment program designed to provide training and develop skills in the fine arts field. Its overarching mission is to change community perspectives, instilling principles of independence, entrepreneurship, and hard work. Consequently, this initiative has the potential to positively impact household economies and, in the long term, improve the overall financial well-being of families.

The Ecoprint and Shibori training process involves environmentally friendly fabric dyeing techniques using natural materials, as well as unique and artistic Shibori dyeing methods. Through this training, housewives can learn new skills that not only enhance their creativity but also open opportunities to start their own businesses. Thus, this program not only provides practical skills but also instills confidence and motivation for continuous growth. This initiative also involves collaboration with various parties, including local communities, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations, to ensure the sustainability and long-term impact of this empowerment program. With ongoing support, women are expected to achieve better economic independence, reduce financial dependence, and overall improve their quality of life and that of their families.

In the broader context, empowerment materializes as a nuanced concept intertwined with the fabric of societal and cultural progression. This perspective aligns seamlessly with the insights articulated by business owner Mrs. Tri Nafsiati:

"In my perspective, it is beneficial as women should also possess the capacity for independence, enabling them to contribute to the family's income." (source: research interview).

From the aforementioned statement, it can be inferred that empowerment is not synonymous with exerting control over others; rather, it involves cultivating skills that enhance self-reliance and inner fortitude. One of the key elements in attaining women's economic empowerment pertains to its execution. When a program is effectively and accurately implemented, it holds the potential to yield positive outcomes for both the community and the participants themselves. The implementation of empowerment initiatives represents a concerted endeavor to bolster familial economic prospects. By enhancing the family's financial standing, there arises an opportunity for better well-being, education, and skill development.

Effective empowerment programs focus on providing women with the necessary tools, resources, and training to build their confidence and capabilities. These initiatives aim to create an environment where women can make informed decisions, pursue economic opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to their households and communities. The success of such programs relies heavily on their ability to address the specific needs and challenges faced by women, ensuring that they are tailored to the local context and cultural dynamics. As women gain economic independence and confidence through these programs, they can break free from traditional constraints, leading to a more equitable and prosperous society. Empowerment, therefore, is not just about individual growth but also about fostering a supportive community that values and uplifts all its members.

The process of implementing women's economic empowerment involves several distinct stages, including:

a. Welfare

This aspect can be regarded as a significant component within endeavors aimed at augmenting women's empowerment. It is undeniable that women find themselves in an

unfavorable position when it comes to accessing welfare. As articulated by the Foster Mother of Ecoprint and Shibori workers. (*source: research interview*).

"Indeed, it was challenging before as I used to do sporadic clothes ironing. Now, things have improved since I work here. The salary is assured, and every day there's something to bring home, ma'am." (*source: research interview*).

Similar sentiments were expressed by Mrs. Sumiyati: (*source: research interview*).

"Previously, it was quite tough, but after joining this place, Alhamdulillah, things have turned for the better."

From the aforementioned interviews, it can be deduced that there has been a noticeable enhancement in terms of economic well-being among the individuals involved. Before their engagement with the Ecoprint and Shibori business, these individuals faced significant challenges in meeting their basic needs and providing for their families. The struggles they experienced included financial instability and a lack of sustainable income sources. However, after becoming part of the Ecoprint and Shibori enterprise and actively participating in its operations, they have been able to effectively fulfill their family's requirements. This involvement has provided them with a steady source of income, allowing them to meet daily necessities such as food, education, and healthcare. Additionally, their participation in the business has empowered them with new skills in artisanal crafts and entrepreneurship, leading to increased self-confidence and a sense of financial independence. This positive change underscores the significant impact that the Ecoprint and Shibori business has had on improving the economic conditions and overall quality of life for those who participate in it. The success of this initiative highlights the potential for similar community-based enterprises to uplift other underserved communities, fostering economic growth, self-reliance, and a more equitable distribution of resources.

b. Access

Access entails women's capability to acquire rights and gain entry to productive resources, including land, credit, training, marketing facilities, labor, and public services, on par with their male counterparts. Empowering women with access to technology and information holds the potential to elevate economic productivity and enhance proficiency in utilizing information technology. Regrettably, marginalized impoverished women often find themselves alienated not just from their local communities, but also from their nations and the global stage.

Presently, the access opportunities afforded to the workforce at Metro City's Ecoprint and Shibori Godong Asri are predominantly confined to training and mentorship. As articulated by Mrs. Giarti:

"One of the advantages I derive here is the abundance of camaraderie. It significantly enriches relationships and fosters extensive acquaintanceships. Additionally, for those who are new to the realm of Ecoprint, there is comprehensive guidance and a trial phase during the initial stages. This approach ensures a solid footing when embarking upon the creation of Ecoprint and Shibori designs." (*source: research interview*).

From the statement above, it can be inferred that the access granted to female workers remains limited to support and training, with aspects such as information technology and broader public services yet to be adequately addressed. This limited access means that while female workers may receive some degree of assistance and opportunities for skill development, they still face significant barriers in essential areas crucial for comprehensive empowerment. Information technology, which is vital in today's digital economy, remains out of reach for many, hindering their ability to compete and thrive in an increasingly digitalized job market.

Additionally, broader public services such as healthcare, transportation, and childcare, which are critical for maintaining a stable work-life balance, are not sufficiently accessible. These gaps in access highlight a pressing need for a more holistic approach to supporting female workers. Such an approach should not only provide training and support but also ensure equitable access to all necessary resources and services, enabling female workers to fully participate in the workforce and benefit from equal opportunities for advancement and economic security. Addressing these issues comprehensively will help to create a more inclusive and supportive environment where female workers can achieve their full potential and contribute more effectively to the economy.

c. *Consientisation*

The comprehension of disparities between sex roles and gender roles has begun to take root among the workforce, evident in the burgeoning recognition of this concept. This discernment is apparent in the considerable familial support extended to wives engaging in income-generating endeavors. This phenomenon arises from the imperative of addressing escalating requisites, prompting husbands to confer authorization for additional income-seeking pursuits. This sentiment finds resonance in Mrs. Batin's perspective:

"My husband stands in favor of my engagement, primarily due to our home requirements. This holds particularly true considering our children who are currently attending junior and senior high school. Consequently, a substantial sum is indispensable. Pursuing employment here has proven beneficial, significantly alleviating the financial strain on my husband's income, which is no longer wholly allocated to educational expenses." (source: research interview).

Similar sentiments are echoed by Mrs. Sumiyati:

"My family on my maternal side sanctions my work, provided I am conscientious about self-care and sustenance to avert exhaustion-induced health setbacks." (source: research interview).

Echoing these sentiments, the proprietor, Mrs. Tri Nafsiati, underscores the significance:

"From my vantage point, it's indeed commendable. It is imperative for women to cultivate autonomy to contribute to the family's financial stability." (source: research interview).

From the foregoing summation, it becomes apparent that the accomplishment of understanding gender parity by husbands dismantles the dichotomy between their roles and those of their wives. This erasure facilitates the fulfillment of familial necessities harmoniously. When husbands embrace gender equality, they break down traditional barriers that separate their responsibilities from those of their wives. This shift allows for a more collaborative and balanced approach to managing family needs, fostering an environment where both partners can contribute equally and effectively. Consequently, this understanding and practice of gender parity enhance the overall well-being and cohesion of the family unit. By sharing duties and responsibilities more equitably, both partners can support each other's personal and professional growth, leading to a more fulfilling and satisfying family life. This collaborative dynamic not only benefits the immediate family but also sets a positive example for children, teaching them the value of equality and cooperation in relationships. In turn, this can contribute to the broader societal acceptance and practice of gender equality, promoting a more just and balanced community.

d. *Participation*

Within this women's economic empowerment initiative, the operational process incorporates women, thereby exemplifying a manifestation of gender parity. As highlighted by Mrs. Tri Nafsiati, the proprietor:

"Mothers within this enterprise are occasionally assisted by their offspring, aiding in sales promotion through activities such as establishing Instagram accounts. The active contributors encompass both the mothers themselves and their female associates, with occasional support rendered by the mothers' children or even the fathers." (source: research interview).

Based on the aforementioned declaration, it is clear that involvement in women's economic empowerment efforts is predominantly led by women themselves. This highlights the significant role that women play in driving initiatives aimed at enhancing their economic status and capabilities. Women's leadership in these efforts demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting economic independence and growth within their communities. Their active participation not only paves the way for more inclusive and equitable economic development but also serves as a powerful example of how gender-focused initiatives can thrive under the leadership of those directly impacted by their outcomes. Women's leadership in economic empowerment also inspires younger generations of women to actively participate in various aspects of economic and social development. Thus, they not only advocate for their own rights and opportunities but also build a stronger foundation for a more sustainable and prosperous future for the entire society.

e. Equality of Control

Regarding the equality of power, this pertains to the husband's disposition in affording his wife the opportunity to engage in financially lucrative endeavors. This sentiment finds an echo in Mrs. Rina's testimony: (source: research interview).

"My husband permits my professional involvement, as it is a practical means for me to meet my necessities."

The dominant power in families still largely rests with men, making women's economic empowerment efforts heavily influenced by patriarchal structures. As a result, these initiatives require a collaborative, not unilateral, approach within the family. Their success often depends on the support of male family members, as shifts in roles can be seen as threats to traditional norms. Therefore, inclusive and cooperative strategies are essential to ensure effective and sustainable empowerment while preserving family harmony.

Aspect	Before Involvement	After Involvement
Economic Well-being	Difficulty in meeting daily needs	Able to meet daily needs better
Access	Limited to domestic and informal work	Receiving training, coaching, and networking opportunities
Consciousness	Traditional gender roles, dependence on husband	Awareness of gender equality, support from family
Participation	Minimal involvement in economic activities	Active involvement in business operations and decision-making
Equality of Control	Husband dominates economic decisions	Husband supports, wife contributes to family income

Figure 2. Research results

CONCLUSION

Economic empowerment of women within Ecoprint and Shibori Godong Asri Metro City undeniably yields commendable outcomes. This achievement is palpably reflected across the spectrum of women's economic empowerment facets, encompassing welfare, access, awareness, participation, and parity in governance. For instance, the welfare facet exhibits a

discernible escalation in catering to familial necessities. Although the access extended to them primarily revolves around training and mentorship, it remarkably suffices to drive the course of women's economic empowerment endeavors. Additionally, the comprehension of gender parity among family laborers underscores a keen acknowledgement of women's contributions, ensuring a seamless execution of income-generating pursuits. In terms of participation and parity in governance, the once dominant male influence has evolved into a more equitable arrangement, thereby endowing women with equitable authority. This transformation ushers in a tangible enhancement in family economics, epitomizing the tangible success of women's economic empowerment initiatives.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

"The authors declare no conflict of interest."

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