

## **Empowerment of Women in the Rattan and Ketak Handicraft Industry in Lombok**

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### **Abstract**

*This research highlights the socio-economic dynamics in women's empowerment through economic development in the rattan and ketak handicraft industry in Lombok. The study reveals key aspects related to the role of women, their level of participation, the impact of economic empowerment on welfare, and effective economic development strategies. Women play a dominant role in production stages that require manual skills, such as sorting raw materials, weaving, and finishing product details. Meanwhile, men are more involved in physically demanding tasks, production management, and distribution, which grants them greater access to decision-making and financial benefits. This gender disparity results in differences in access to decision-making and profit distribution. Despite high female participation in the industry, inequalities persist, particularly in wage recognition and access to career advancement. Women tend to have longer working hours but lower earnings due to the unfair division of labor. Enhancing women's skills and access to financial capital significantly contributes to their economic independence, allowing them to expand production capacity and market reach. Training programs, policy interventions, and digital marketing adoption are essential for increasing women's roles and competitiveness in this industry. However, cultural barriers still limit women's participation in business decision-making. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts from the government, financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations to create a supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. This study concludes that women's empowerment in the rattan and ketak handicraft industry in Lombok requires a holistic approach. By improving skills, ensuring equal economic opportunities, and promoting gender inclusivity, the industry can develop sustainably while enhancing women's socio-economic status.*

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## BACKGROUND

Women face increasing demands in their roles in the era of globalisation, where high performance expectations require continuous improvement in their capacity and knowledge. In Indonesia, the concept of empowerment was initially aimed at strengthening society socially, economically, and politically to change their position in the face of dominant social forces. The essence of empowerment is to enable marginalised communities to actively negotiate in the development process, not just to be the object that is built (A'yun & Faidati, 2021). Women's limited access to education and training reinforces their economic limitations. Household chores and domestic responsibilities reduce opportunities for knowledge and skills development, hindering their ability to become economically independent. Giving women equal access to education, training, and support for economic independence can increase their role in the country's economic development (Abdurrahman & Tusianti, 2021).

The rattan and wickerwork industry plays an important role in the economy by involving large business units and employing a significant number of workers. The manual and traditional production process emphasises the importance of the role of labour in improving the economy in this sector. However, there is a pattern of gender relations that shows significant differences in the roles played by male and female workers in the production process. The role of women in this industry is often related to stages of production that require manual skills and precision, such as sorting, knitting, or finishing small details on products. Meanwhile, male workers may be more involved in stages that are considered more physically demanding or in production management. However, this gender-based separation of roles can lead to injustice. Differences in the tasks performed by men and women may result in disparities in the recognition, rewards, or distribution of the profits derived from this industry (Amelia, 2023). This can also limit women's access to decision-making related to production or the business as a whole.

The pattern of gender relations in the weaving industry shows a big difference in the roles of men and women, with women tending to be involved in stages of production that require manual skills, while men are more dominant in physical tasks or production management (Amanah et al., 2023). This can result in gender inequality in the recognition, reward, and sharing of profits, limiting women's access to production-related decision-making. To overcome this, it is necessary to provide equal opportunities for men and women in various aspects of the weaving industry, from training to wages, to balance roles and recognition in order to overcome gender inequality in the rattan and hemp industries.

Therefore, the researcher wants to encourage concrete steps that lead to gender equality in the weaving industry. By providing equal opportunities for men and women in terms of training, division of labour, recognition and fair compensation, we can improve the disparities that occur in roles and recognition in the rattan and raffia industries. Only by ensuring equal access and fair recognition can women become more involved in decision-making related to production and business as a whole, creating a fairer and more inclusive industrial environment for all.

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Figure 1: example of rattan and wickerwork

The development of anyaman ketak is not only related to production aspects, but also has a significant social and economic impact. This government initiative opens the door to improving the local community's economy by empowering existing traditional skills. In addition, the promotion and wider market introduction of anyaman ketak handicrafts through these exhibitions also increases the role and contribution of this industry in the regional economy.

Anyaman Ketak, a distinctive handicraft product, has a large market share, especially in tourist areas such as West Nusa Tenggara and Bali. Although originally used as a decorative item, the original function of this product is still inherent in its use. Lombok wickerwork is not only popular domestically, but has also successfully penetrated international markets in various countries such as Germany, England, France, a number of countries in Asia, as well as several other developing countries. The export-import activities carried out by business people both in Lombok and in other regions have contributed to expanding the market for wickerwork both at home and abroad, so that the demand for this craft has increased significantly. Anyaman Ketak is not only valued for its high aesthetic value, but also for its usefulness in everyday life. In Narmada, for example, Ketak artisans use it as a useful tool in their daily activities. This skill is not only seen as an expression of art, but also as an important part of cultural heritage that can be used practically in everyday life.

## METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative approach, chosen in accordance with the research objectives. Rooted in postpositivist philosophy, this approach enables the analysis of natural conditions of the research object, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument. The method emphasizes the examination of natural conditions, where the researcher plays a crucial role in observing phenomena. Data collection is conducted through triangulation techniques, with informants selected using a purposive sampling method. Data analysis follows an inductive/qualitative approach, placing greater emphasis on understanding meaning rather than simply generating ideas. According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative methods are used to gain

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deep insights into the observed phenomena. The primary data in this study comes from interviews with artisans and direct observations of rattan and ketak craftsmen in Jango Tourism Village, Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from the website of the Central Lombok Industry Office and previous research related to economic development through craft industry centers

In this study, the researcher applies the SWOT analysis method, which is a non-numerical evaluation tool. SWOT analysis allows for the identification of key factors that help formulate strategies to strengthen women's empowerment through economic development, particularly in the Lombok ketak and rattan craft industry. The research aims to maximize strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats within the industry (Indrawati, 2022). Various data collection techniques, including interviews, observations, and documentation, are utilized through multiple sources such as the internet and other media. Data is collected through interviews with artisans in Jango Tourism Village, observations, internet searches, and direct visits to selected halal institutions, chosen based on specific research objectives using purposive sampling.

The SWOT analysis process in this research consists of data collection, data analysis, and decision-making. During data collection, various information related to women's empowerment through economic development is gathered. Data analysis involves identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on the collected data. The final stage is decision-making, where strategies are formulated based on the SWOT analysis to develop and enhance women's empowerment through economic development initiatives. This approach helps create a structured and strategic plan to strengthen the local craft industry while supporting the economic independence of women artisans

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESULTS**

#### **Gender Inequality in the Handicraft Industry**

The handicraft industry still faces significant gender inequality, particularly in the division of labor based on traditional societal roles. Women are more often involved in production and raw material processing, while men dominate marketing and business management aspects. This results in a lack of representation of women in managerial positions and decision-making. The lack of access for women to strategic positions in this industry is a major factor hindering gender equality. Social and cultural factors that still perceive women as domestic workers further exacerbate this condition. Without changes in the organizational structure of the handicraft industry, women will continue to face obstacles in fully developing their potential and contributions.

#### **Strategies for Women's Empowerment through Economic Development**

To address gender inequality in the handicraft industry, strategies for women's empowerment through economic development are needed, including:

1. Skills Training and Financial Education
  - a. Providing training in production skills, business management, and financial literacy to enable women to run their businesses independently.
  - b. Enhancing women's understanding of marketing strategies and financial management to strengthen their business competitiveness.
2. Increased Access to Capital and Business Networks
  - a. Facilitating women's access to funding sources, whether through banks, cooperatives, or microfinance institutions.
  - b. Helping women build business networks with local and international partners to expand the market for their handicraft products.
3. Gender Equality Campaigns in the Handicraft Industry
  - a. Raising awareness among society and industry players about the importance of women's roles in business decision-making.
  - b. Encouraging more women to take leadership roles in the handicraft industry through advocacy and leadership training.

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### **Social and Economic Impact of Women's Empowerment**

Empowering women in the handicraft industry has wide-ranging positive impacts, both socially and economically:

1. Improving Women's and Community Welfare
  - a. With increased skills and income, women's living standards and those of their families improve.
  - b. Economically independent women tend to invest in their family's education and health, contributing to community welfare.
2. Contribution to Local Economic Growth
  - a. Gender equality in the handicraft industry can enhance productivity and innovation in the sector.
  - b. With more women involved in the handicraft industry, regional economic growth can accelerate due to the emergence of more women-led small and medium enterprises.

### **Policy Implications**

To ensure that women's empowerment strategies run optimally, policies that support women's active participation in the handicraft industry are needed, such as:

1. Policies Encouraging Women's Participation
  - a. Governments and relevant organizations need to provide programs and regulations that encourage women's involvement in various aspects of the handicraft industry.
  - b. Incentives for handicraft businesses that provide greater opportunities for women in business leadership.
2. Equal Wage Regulations
  - a. Regulations ensuring equal wages between men and women in the handicraft industry to reduce economic disparities.
  - b. Promoting transparency in wage structures and corporate policies to ensure there is no gender discrimination in remuneration.
3. Access to Digital Technology and Online Marketing
  - c. Increasing women's access to digital technology and online marketing to help them expand their business reach.
  - d. Training on the use of e-commerce and social media as effective marketing tools for women's handicraft products.

### **DISCUSSION**

This research highlights the socio-economic dynamics in women's empowerment through economic development in the rattan and ketak handicraft industry in Lombok. This study reveals various important aspects related to the role of women, their level of participation, the impact of economic empowerment on welfare, and effective economic development strategies. Women play a dominant role in the rattan and ketak handicraft industry, especially in production stages that require manual skills. They are responsible for sorting raw materials, weaving, and finishing product details that require high precision. This role demonstrates women's expertise in creating high-quality products with aesthetic and economic value.



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Meanwhile, men are more involved in stages requiring greater physical strength, such as raw material collection and product distribution. They also play a more dominant role in production and distribution management, which indirectly gives them greater access to decision-making and financial benefits. This gender disparity leads to differences in access to decision-making and profit distribution. Although women contribute significantly to production, they still face limitations in obtaining equal rights in economic and social aspects. The level of women's participation in this industry is quite high, given the large number of women working as artisans in households and small business groups. However, this participation is not always accompanied by equal recognition in terms of wages and opportunities for career advancement in the industry.

Women's working hours in the rattan and ketak handicraft industry are very high. However, their income tends to be lower than that of men due to the unfair division of labor roles. Women perform more high-value-added tasks, but their compensation is still not equivalent. Improving skills and women's access to business capital is an essential factor in enhancing their economic independence. With better skills and financial support, women can increase production capacity and competitiveness in both local and international markets. Women with broader access to training and marketing have greater opportunities to improve their living standards. Skills training not only increases production efficiency but also broadens women's knowledge of effective business and marketing strategies.

However, gender relations that limit women's role in business decision-making remain a major challenge in improving their welfare. Many women still depend on men's decisions regarding business management and income allocation. A training-based approach and skills enhancement are key factors in increasing women's role in this industry. Continuous training can help women become more independent and confident in developing their businesses. Policy interventions promoting gender equality, especially in terms of wages and access to economic resources, are necessary. These policies must ensure that women receive equal rights in profit distribution and opportunities for advancement in the industry.

Digital marketing and business network strengthening are crucial strategies for enhancing the competitiveness of the rattan and ketak handicraft industry. By leveraging digital platforms, women can expand their market reach and increase their product value. Gender disparity in this industry is caused by a division of labor based on traditional roles in society. Women are often regarded as supporting labor rather than leaders or decision-makers in the industry. Limited access for women to managerial positions and decision-making hinders gender equality in this industry. To address this issue, more inclusive empowerment programs oriented toward increasing women's roles in managerial aspects are needed. Skills training and financial education can help women become more independent in running their businesses. With better financial management knowledge, women can manage their businesses more effectively and increase their profits. Besides training, business mentoring is also crucial in supporting women's business development. This mentoring can include technical production aspects, marketing strategies, and sustainable financial management.

Collaboration between the government, financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations is necessary to create an ecosystem that supports women's empowerment in the handicraft industry. With support from various parties, women can more easily access capital and broader markets. Public awareness of the importance of gender equality in this industry also needs to be increased. Through campaigns and education, it is hoped that society will better understand the significance of women's roles in economic development. Overall, women's empowerment in the rattan and ketak handicraft industry in Lombok requires a holistic approach. By improving skills, access to economic resources, and reducing gender disparities, women can play a more significant role in local economic development.

Through various effective strategies, the rattan and ketak handicraft industry can not only grow economically but also become a more inclusive and sustainable sector for women as key players in this

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industry. The implications of these findings are significant for the future development of halal tourism in Indonesia. Firstly, the results underscore the importance of synergizing infrastructure development with the implementation of sharia-compliant service standards. Secondly, the application of the ACES model provides destination managers and policymakers with a systematic approach to pinpoint areas that require targeted improvement, thereby contributing to more strategic and effective development plans. However, it is important to note that the current research is based on preliminary data, which necessitates further validation through more extensive field studies. Additionally, the diverse regional conditions across Indonesia call for a more context-specific application of the ACES model. Consequently, future research should integrate comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analyses while taking into account local factors, ultimately offering more nuanced insights and strategies for enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of halal tourism destinations.

Our findings indicate a significant increase in the availability of Sharia-compliant hotels and halal-certified restaurants over the past decade, driven by both market demand and proactive efforts from industry players. Survey responses reveal high levels of consumer satisfaction when facilities strictly adhere to halal standards, emphasizing the importance of quality services in enhancing the experience of Muslim travelers. Additionally, improvements in transportation and connectivity, including enhanced air, rail, and road networks, have made destinations more accessible. These developments have facilitated greater flow of Muslim tourists, further contributing to the overall success of the halal tourism industry. The overall growth in halal tourism visitors over recent years underscores the effectiveness of these strategic improvements and policy implementations.

Our findings indicate that over the past decade there has been a significant increase in the availability of Sharia-compliant hotels and halal-certified restaurants. This positive trend can be attributed to both the rising market demand and proactive measures taken by industry stakeholders. Survey responses from various tourism experts reveal that consumers express high levels of satisfaction when facilities strictly adhere to halal standards, emphasizing the essential role that quality services play in shaping the overall experience for Muslim travelers. In addition, improvements in transportation and connectivity—bolstered by enhanced air, rail, and road networks—have made travel destinations considerably more accessible, thereby increasing the flow of Muslim tourists and contributing substantially to the overall success of the industry. Collectively, these factors underscore the critical importance of aligning service quality and infrastructure development with the evolving needs of halal tourism.

## CONCLUSION

Gender equality in the handicraft industry is not just a matter of social justice but also a crucial factor in boosting economic growth and social welfare. Through appropriate empowerment strategies and inclusive policy support, women can make greater contributions to this industry, creating a more innovative, productive, and sustainable business environment.

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