

## Gender Awareness Factor in Coastal Women Entrepreneur's Efforts to Support Family Economic Resilience

Intan Fitranisa\*, Elizabeth Adelyne Putri, Fikri Raihan, Zahra Najla Octavian, Hannanah Amaliya, Nayya Latifah Rahmadini

Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia

\*intan.fitranisa@fisip.unair.ac.id

### Abstract

Coastal communities in Indonesia continue to face structural challenges such as poverty, limited access to education, and patriarchal social systems, which place women in vulnerable social and economic positions. Despite these constraints, coastal women have increasingly participated in entrepreneurial activities to support household income and community economic resilience. This study aims to analyze gender awareness among coastal female entrepreneurs and examine the challenges and empowerment strategies that shape their entrepreneurial experiences in Tambak Wedi Village, Surabaya. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using unstructured observation and in-depth interviews with ten coastal female entrepreneurs selected based on business activity, duration of business operation, and active involvement in family economic support. Data were analyzed through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and thematic analysis. The findings show that gender awareness among coastal female entrepreneurs reflected in their active economic participation, shared domestic responsibilities, and involvement in household decision-making. However, women continue to face structural barriers, including gender stereotypes, double burdens, limited access to government support, institutional collaboration, and digital technology play important roles in strengthening women's entrepreneurial capacity and economic independence. This study concludes that achieving gender equality in coastal communities requires inclusive empowerment strategies that expand women's access to training, financial support, and technology while transforming patriarchal social perceptions of women's roles in both domestic and public spheres.

**Keywords: Female Entrepreneur; Entrepreneurship; Coastal Women; Gender Awareness; Gender Equality**

### Abstrak

*Masyarakat pesisir di Indonesia masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan struktural seperti kemiskinan, keterbatasan akses pendidikan, dan system sosial patriarkal yang memposisikan perempuan pada situasi sosial dan ekonomi rentan. Di tengah kondisi tersebut, perempuan pesisir semakin aktif terlibat dalam kegiatan kewirausahaan sebagai usaha mendukung pendapatan keluarga serta memperkuat ketahanan ekonomi masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesadaran gender pada perempuan pesisir yang berprofesi sebagai wirausaha dan mengkaji tantangan serta strategi pemberdayaan yang membentuk pengalaman kewirausahaan mereka di Kelurahan Tambak Wedi, Surabaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif melalui observasi tidak terstruktur dan wawancara mendalam terhadap sepuluh perempuan wirausaha pesisir yang dipilih berdasarkan aktivitas usaha, lama menjalankan usaha, dan keterlibatan aktif dalam menopang ekonomi keluarga. Data dianalisis melalui proses reduksi data, kategorisasi, interpretasi, dan analisis*

*tematik. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa kesadaran gender pada perempuan wirausaha pesisir tercermin dalam partisipasi aktif mereka dalam aktivitas ekonomi, pembagian tanggung jawab domestic, serta keterlibatan dalam pengambilan keputusan keluarga. Namun demikian, perempuan masih menghadapi berbagai hambatan structural, seperti stereotip gender, beban ganda, keterbatasan akses terhadap dukungan pemerintah dan sumber daya usaha. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa dukungan pemerintah, kolaborasi kelembagaan, dan pemanfaatan teknologi digital berperan penting dalam mengembangkan kapasitas kewirausahaan dan kemandirian ekonomi perempuan. Simpulan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pencapaian kesetaraan gender di komunitas pesisir membutuhkan strategi pemberdayaan yang inklusif, perluasan akses pelatihan, dukungan finansial, dan teknologi, serta transformasi pandangan patriarkal terhadap peran perempuan di ranah domestik maupu publik.*

***Kata Kunci: Pengusaha Perempuan; Kewirausahaan; Perempuan Pesisir; Kesadaran Gender; Kesetaraan Gender***

## **Introduction**

Poverty, low human resource competence, and socio-cultural inequality remain major challenges in coastal communities, particularly for women (Wulandari, Indrianti and Hilmi, 2022). Coastal women are often positioned in vulnerable social and economic conditions due to limited access to education, employment, and economic resources. Their geographical distance from urban centers and restricted access to modernization further deepen their marginalization and limit opportunities for self-development. In many coastal communities, women are still expected to fulfill domestic responsibilities while also supporting household income, creating a structural burden that affects their social and economic mobility.

At the same time, coastal women play a significant role in maintaining family welfare and strengthening community resilience (Wahyudi, 2012). The economic role of women has become increasingly important in supporting family resilience, particularly in the context of economic uncertainty. Family economic resilience refers to the ability of a household to sustain income and resources in order to meet basic needs and maintain social stability (Frankenberger and McCaston, 1998). In Indonesia, women's participation in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has shown significant growth and has become one of the major contributors to household and national economic development.

Women's entrepreneurship has increasingly become a significant force in economic development, particularly through business innovation and household economic sustainability (Brush, Carter, Gatewood, Greene and Hart, 2009). This condition shows that women's entrepreneurial activities are essential not only for family resilience but also for broader economic development. However, women's participation in economic activities cannot be separated from patriarchal social structures that continue to shape gender relations.

In patriarchal communities, women are frequently positioned as secondary to men and are socially constructed as primarily responsible for domestic work, childcare, and household management. This social construction creates a double burden, where women are required to manage domestic responsibilities while also contributing economically to the family. According to Giddens (1993), patriarchal values are socially reproduced through everyday practices and institutional structures, reinforcing unequal power relations between men and women.

Such inequalities often result in discrimination, limited decision-making authority, and restricted access to resources, training, and business opportunities (Nafi, 2022). Women's empowerment has therefore become an important approach in addressing gender inequality and increasing women's economic participation. Empowerment allows women to gain greater access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making spaces that were previously dominated by men (Barus, 2015). In addition, women's empowerment cannot be separated from gender awareness, as awareness of rights and social positioning shapes women's ability to negotiate power relations and access economic opportunities.

Through gender awareness, women are able to challenge discriminatory structures, negotiate their social positions, and strengthen their economic agency. As argued by Kabeer (2001) women's empowerment is fundamentally linked to the expansion of women's ability to make strategic life choices and exercise agency in social and economic spheres. Previous studies have widely examined women's empowerment, gender equality, and female entrepreneurship in Indonesia, particularly in relation to economic participation and community development.

However, most of these studies focus on women's economic empowerment in general and pay limited attention to how gender awareness specifically shapes women's entrepreneurial strategies in coastal communities. This limitation is important because coastal women experience unique social-cultural and economic challenges that differ from women in urban or non-coastal contexts. In particular, the intersection between patriarchal norms, economic necessity, and entrepreneurial practices remains underexplored. Therefore, there is still a significant gap in understanding how gender awareness influences coastal women's entrepreneurial efforts in strengthening family economic resilience.

Based on this gap, this study aims to explore the gender awareness of coastal women entrepreneurs in Tambak Wedi Village, Surabaya, and analyze how such awareness influences their entrepreneurial efforts to support family economic resilience. Tambak Wedi Village provides a relevant context as a coastal community where women actively engage in fisheries-based trade and small-scale entrepreneurial activities, reflecting the economic dynamics of coastal households (Kusnadi, 2015). This study is important because it highlights the experiences of coastal women in negotiating economic participation within patriarchal social structures. Furthermore, the findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on women's empowerment, gender equality, and community-based economic resilience in coastal areas.

## **Method**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore gender awareness among coastal female entrepreneurs in Tambak Wedi Village, Surabaya, and its relation to family economic resilience. Data were collected through unstructured observation and in-depth interviews conducted between October and November 2024. The observation focused on participants' daily entrepreneurial activities, social interactions, and economic practices within their household and community environments. The study involved ten female entrepreneurs selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria: (1) women who actively manage their own business, (2) have been running their business for at least two years, (3) reside in Tambak Wedi Village, and (4) contribute economically to their household income. The participants were engaged in small-scale businesses such as food processing, fishery-related trade, and home-based selling activities, reflecting the economic characteristics of coastal communities. In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured guiding

questions to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and understanding of gender roles, economic responsibilities, and empowerment. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and was recorded with participants' consent. The collected data were transcribed and analyzed through three stages: data coding, categorization, and interpretation. In the coding stage, important statements and recurring ideas related to gender awareness, economic participation, and family resilience were identified and labeled. These codes were then grouped into broader thematic categories to identify patterns and relationships across participants' experiences. Finally, the data were interpreted by connecting the emerging themes with the social and economic context of coastal women's lives to understand how gender awareness shapes their entrepreneurial efforts and family economic resilience.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **1. Understanding Gender Awareness among Coastal Female Entrepreneurs**

#### **a. Gender Equality in Domestic and Public Roles**

Gender awareness among coastal female entrepreneurs in Tambak Wedi Village is reflected in their understanding of gender equality as a balanced distribution of rights and responsibilities between men and women, both in domestic and public spheres. The interview findings show that the informants did not define gender equality solely as access to economic activities, but also as shared responsibilities in household matters. Informant 1, a street food vendor aged 48 years, explained that she and her husband share domestic responsibilities such as preparing food, cleaning the house, and supporting each other's work activities (Interview, October 2024).

Similarly, Informant 3, a traditional cake seller aged 51 years, stated that gender equality means equal opportunities and equal responsibilities, including childcare, household chores, and economic activities (Interview, October 2024). These findings indicate that gender equality in coastal households is understood as collaborative partnership rather than rigid gender-based role separation. This finding shows that gender awareness among coastal women is not limited to economic participation, but also includes the renegotiation of domestic roles.

The ability of women to participate in income-generating activities while maintaining domestic responsibilities reflects their adaptive strategy in responding to economic and social demands. However, this condition also reflects the persistence of gendered labor expectations, where women remain strongly attached to reproductive responsibilities. This finding supports the argument of Kabeer (2001), who emphasizes that women's empowerment is closely related to the expansion of women's agency in negotiating structural inequalities within everyday life.

#### **b. Double Burden and Economic Participation**

The findings reveal that coastal female entrepreneurs continue to experience a double burden in carrying out domestic and economic responsibilities simultaneously. Although women actively engage in entrepreneurial activities, domestic work remains their primary responsibility. Informant 2, a meatball seller aged 56 years, explained that women's economic participation became increasingly important after the economic instability following the COVID-19 pandemic, as additional income was necessary to sustain household needs (Interview, November 2024).

Likewise, Informant 5, a catering business owner aged 58 years, stated that her business has significantly improved her family's economic condition while also creating employment opportunities within her neighborhood (Interview, November 2024). These findings indicate that economic participation among coastal women is strongly driven by household economic necessity. Poverty and unstable household income become the main

factors encouraging women to enter entrepreneurial activities. However, their participation in the public sphere does not automatically reduce domestic expectations. Instead, economic participation often adds to their responsibilities, reinforcing what feminist scholars identify as the double burden of women's labor. This finding aligns with the perspective of Ferguson and McNally (2013), which explain that women's productive labor often coexists with unpaid reproductive labor, creating structural inequality in everyday economic life.

### **c. Decision-Making and Women's Agency**

Another important finding of this study is the increased participation of coastal women in household decision-making processes. Informant 10, a street food vendor aged 36 years, explained that gender equality allows women to participate more actively in making family and business decisions, rather than relying solely on male authority (Interview, November 2024). For the informant, decision-making participation represents recognition of women's capability and equal position within the household. This shows that gender awareness strengthens women's confidence to express their perspectives and contribute to strategic family decisions. The findings demonstrate that gender awareness is closely related to women's agency in determining their economic and social roles. Beyond financial contribution, women's involvement in decision-making reflects a shift in power relations within the household. This transformation is significant because it challenges patriarchal structures that traditionally position men as the primary decision-makers. In this context, gender equality becomes not only a principle of fairness but also a mechanism for expanding women's autonomy and social influence. As argued by Simone de Beauvoir, women's active participation in economic and social life enables them to assert themselves as subjects rather than objects within patriarchal systems (Simbolon, Maharani, Santoso and Daffa, 2025).

## **2. Challenges of Gender Awareness Among Coastal Female Entrepreneurs**

### **a. Patriarchal Stereotypes and Gendered Limitations**

The findings reveal that patriarchal values remain one of the primary challenges faced by coastal female entrepreneurs in implementing gender awareness in their daily lives. Several informants explained that social stereotypes continue to position women as less capable than men, particularly in decision-making and business leadership. Informant 8, a traditional market seller aged 43 years, stated that women often experience restrictions in making independent decisions because social norms still place men in superior positions within both family and community structures (Interview, October 2024). This finding indicates that gender inequality among coastal communities is sustained through social expectations that normalize male dominance and female dependency. These findings show that patriarchal culture continues to shape women's opportunities and autonomy in entrepreneurship. Although women have entered economic spaces, their authority is still frequently questioned or limited by community expectations. This finding supports Judith Butler's concept of gender as a social construction, in which gender roles are continuously reproduced through repeated social practices and norms.

Similarly, Raewyn Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity creates hierarchical power relations that position men as dominant and women as subordinate within social structures (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The challenges faced by coastal female entrepreneurs are not merely individual experiences but are structurally embedded in coastal livelihood systems, where gendered divisions of labor and limited institutional support continue to shape women's economic participation (Wardhani et al., 2025).

## **b. Limited Business Access and Structural Barriers**

Another major challenge identified in this study relates to women's limited access to business resources and entrepreneurial development. Several informants reported difficulties in expanding their businesses due to limited access to training, funding, and business networks. In addition, many women still manage their business finances together with household finances, creating difficulties in financial planning and formal loan applications. This condition reflects a structural barrier where entrepreneurial growth is constrained not only by economic limitations but also by insufficient managerial literacy and institutional access. The findings suggest that women's entrepreneurial challenges are closely related to structural inequalities rather than merely individual limitations. Limited education and financial literacy reduce their ability to formalize and expand their businesses. This finding is consistent with Tranggono, Dwiridotjahjono, Andarini and Rasyidah (2017) who found that coastal women often experience low access to education, business development programs, and institutional support, which affects their economic productivity. In this context, gender awareness requires not only individual consciousness but also structural support to create equal economic opportunities.

## **c. Stigma Toward Women's Physical and Business Competence**

The study also found that gender stigma remains a persistent challenge, particularly regarding women's physical strength and business capability. Informant 4, a *jamu* seller aged 45 years, explained that people often doubted her ability to carry out physically demanding work such as producing herbal drinks independently, despite her proven capability (Interview, November 2024). Similarly, Informant 5, a catering business owner aged 58 years, stated that people often questioned her ability to manage large-scale cooking activities because such work was perceived as physically demanding for women (Interview, November 2024). Informant 7, aged 40 years, also experienced similar perceptions but interpreted them as a form of social concern rather than discrimination (Interview, November 2024). These findings demonstrate that gender stereotypes continue to shape public perceptions of women's professional capabilities, particularly in labor-intensive business sectors. The assumption that women are physically weaker than men often leads to doubts about their managerial and entrepreneurial competence. This finding confirms Tjandraningsih's (2018) argument that gender stereotypes influence leadership perceptions and create barriers for women in obtaining recognition and authority in professional environments. However, the findings also show that women actively negotiate these stereotypes by proving their competence through their work performance.

## **d. Negotiating Equality and Social Acceptance**

Interestingly, not all informants reported experiencing discrimination or stigma in their entrepreneurial activities. Informant 1 and Informant 2 explained that they felt supported by their families and communities and experienced equal treatment in their daily economic activities (Interview, October 2024). This finding suggests that gender relations within coastal communities are not homogeneous, as some women experience more supportive environments than others. The presence of supportive family and community relationships can strengthen women's confidence and economic participation.

This variation in experience indicates that gender awareness is influenced by social context, family dynamics, and community values. While patriarchal norms remain dominant, there are signs of shifting attitudes toward women's economic participation. This finding supports Indrawasih and Pradipta (2021) who argue that communities with stronger gender equality values are more adaptable to changing gender roles and more supportive of women's participation in public life. Therefore, the implementation of gender awareness among coastal female entrepreneurs remains a negotiated process shaped by both structural barriers and social acceptance.

### **3. The Roles of Government, Technology, and Empowerment of Coastal Female Entrepreneurs**

#### **a. Government Support and Entrepreneurial Capacity Building**

The findings show that government support plays an important role in strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of coastal female entrepreneurs, particularly through training programs, business assistance, and management coaching. Previous studies also indicate that women-led MSMEs perform better when empowerment programs are integrated with digital literacy, legal support, and entrepreneurial capacity-building, enabling women to expand market access and improve business sustainability (Raspati and Kadiyono, 2023).

However, the accessibility of these programs remains limited. Informant 10, a street food vendor aged 36 years, explained that training programs organized by the government are beneficial, especially in technology and financial management, but limited participant quotas often prevent wider participation (Interview, November 2024). Similarly, Informant 6, aged 48 years, expressed her interest in joining entrepreneurial training programs but stated that limited training capacity had become a significant barrier (Interview, November 2024). These findings indicate that while support programs exist, their reach remains insufficient to accommodate the needs of coastal female entrepreneurs.

The limited accessibility of government support demonstrates that empowerment programs have not yet been fully inclusive. This condition creates unequal opportunities for women to improve their business capacity and managerial competence. The findings suggest that empowerment initiatives require broader implementation and more targeted strategies to reach women in coastal communities. This is consistent with Indiworo, (2017) who emphasizes that government intervention through business coaching, financial assistance, and capacity-building programs is essential for the development of women-led MSMEs. Therefore, government support should not only be available, but also accessible and sustainable.

#### **b. Collaboration and Institutional Support for Women's Businesses**

The study also found that women's entrepreneurial empowerment requires collaboration beyond government institutions. The involvement of private sectors, banking institutions, and community organizations is necessary to strengthen women's business development. Informants highlighted the importance of broader business networks, product innovation training, and financial assistance in supporting their entrepreneurial growth. These forms of support are essential because women often face limitations in accessing formal business resources independently.

The findings show that empowerment is more effective when institutional collaboration is established. Business development for coastal women cannot rely solely on personal effort, but requires ecosystem support involving multiple stakeholders. This finding aligns with Marthalina (2018) who argues that collaborative support through training, product innovation, and business management assistance can increase women's entrepreneurial competitiveness. In this context, empowerment becomes a collective process where institutional support contributes to strengthening women's economic resilience.

#### **c. Technology Utilization as an Empowerment Strategy**

Technology has emerged as an important tool for empowering coastal female entrepreneurs, particularly in business promotion, communication, and product distribution. The findings reveal that several informants actively use digital platforms such as WhatsApp and online delivery services to support their businesses. Informant 6 explained that digital technology allows women to conduct business activities from home

while maintaining household responsibilities, making entrepreneurship more flexible and accessible (Interview, November 2024). This finding indicates that technology expands women's economic opportunities without requiring them to leave their domestic roles entirely.

The use of technology among coastal female entrepreneurs reflects the growing integration of digital tools into small-scale business activities. Technology allows women to access broader markets, improve customer communication, and increase business efficiency. This finding supports Lestari (2010) who argues that information technology serves as an effective promotional and communication medium for female entrepreneurs. However, technological empowerment remains uneven due to limited digital literacy and unequal access to technological resources, particularly in coastal communities.

#### **d. Technology and the Reconfiguration of Domestic Roles**

Although technology creates new business opportunities for women, the findings also reveal that digital entrepreneurship often reinforces women's domestic responsibilities. Informants explained that online business activities are preferred because they can be conducted from home while continuing household duties. This condition shows that technology does not necessarily reduce domestic labor, but rather shifts entrepreneurial activities into domestic spaces. As a result, women continue to negotiate between productive and reproductive roles simultaneously.

This finding reflects the transformation of women's labor in the digital era, where domestic spaces increasingly become economic spaces. As argued by Izzati (2019) online entrepreneurship can be understood as an extension of women's domesticated labor into virtual economic spaces. While this creates economic flexibility, it also risks maintaining traditional expectations that women remain primarily responsible for household management. Therefore, technology should be understood as both an opportunity and a challenge in women's empowerment.

#### **e. Empowerment and Women's Independence**

The findings further show that women's empowerment contributes significantly to strengthening self-confidence and economic independence. Informant 9, aged 29 years, explained that having personal income and economic activities allows women to become more independent and less financially dependent on their husbands (Interview, November 2024). This finding demonstrates that empowerment is not only related to economic contribution, but also to personal autonomy and self-determination.

Women's economic independence represents an important dimension of empowerment because it transforms women's social position within the family and community. Financial independence reduces economic dependency and increases women's bargaining position in decision-making processes. The findings suggest that empowerment should be understood holistically, encompassing skill development, access to resources, and psychological confidence. Through empowerment, women are able to strengthen not only their household economy but also their individual agency and social participation.

### **Conclusion**

This study shows that gender awareness among coastal female entrepreneurs in Tambak Wedi Village is reflected through their active participation in economic activities, share domestic responsibilities, and involvement in household decision-making. The findings reveal that women's entrepreneurial activities contribute significantly to family economic resilience and local economic development. However, their participation in the public sphere does not automatically eliminate gender inequality, as many women continue to experience a double burden, patriarchal stereotypes, limited

access to business resources, and unequal opportunities for entrepreneurial development. These findings confirm that gender awareness among coastal women is shaped by the intersection of economic necessity, social norms, and structural constraints. The main contribution of this study lies in highlighting how coastal female entrepreneurs negotiate gender roles through entrepreneurship while maintaining domestic responsibilities in a patriarchal social setting. The study also demonstrates that government support, institutional collaboration, and technology utilization are important factors in strengthening women's empowerment and economic independence. Therefore, achieving gender equality in coastal communities requires integrated and inclusive strategies that not only expand women's access to training, funding, and digital technology, but also transform social perceptions of women's roles in both domestic and public sphere.

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