

## Rural Women Entrepreneur in Digital Era

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**Abstract.** Technological developments affect changes in social conditions. In the digital era, the growth of entrepreneurial activities carried out by urban women is increasing. This provides an opportunity for women to join the public sector without leaving their responsibilities as a housewife. But we know that the characteristics of urban communities and rural communities that tend to be different. Urban communities tend to be dynamic in accepting the changes because influenced by the fast technological and internet developments, whereas rural communities tend to be slow to accept it. The emergence of entrepreneur women also began to be found in rural areas, today. This study aims to find out how gender harmony in rural families, especially in families that have women (or wife figures) as a women entrepreneur. The researcher used phenomenology studies by taking data through in-depth interviews and literature studies. The results of this study also explain the double workload experience in rural women entrepreneurs. In addition, this research also explains how the social and economic aspects affect them to learn how rural women entrepreneurs deal with challenges and opportunities to maintain existence in the digital era.

**Keywords:** *digital era, entrepreneur, rural, women*

### INTRODUCTION

Socio-cultural changes can be carried out slowly or quickly. Social change is a social process experienced by members of society and all elements of culture and social systems, where all levels of community life are voluntary or influenced by external elements leaving patterns of life, culture, and social systems much later adjust or use new patterns of life, culture and social systems (Bungin, 2007 : 91).

The social change which is also a change in value will demand from men or women can flexibly adapt to various changes that take place (Sadli, 2010 : 14). As is the case, women are increasingly allowed not to be responsible for all household tasks (Bourdieu, 2010 : 125). The presence of sophisticated electronic household appliances is considered to help reduce the workload of women in domestic work matters. The change does not only occur in urban communities that have dynamic characteristics. Slowly changes also affect rural communities that prioritize collectivism in social life. Collectivism is a view that is inherent in rural

communities. Tonnies and Durkheim tried to compare between villages and cities based on differences in the basis and quality of social relations (Damsar, Indriyani, 2016: 19). Social relations in the village still tend to be natural, intimate, and intense. On the contrary, the social relations of the people in the city seem to prioritize individualism and industrial economic interests.

This study aims to find out, does this change also open up similar opportunities for rural women? how women in the Licin village, Licin sub-district, Banyuwangi district are taking this opportunity? Furthermore, this study wants to explore more deeply whether there are challenges for rural women entrepreneur? The Licin Village is located close to the Mount Ijen, Licin District, Banyuwangi Regency. This village is located in the fertile highlands with quite cool temperatures. The majority of the village community works as farmers, farm laborers and tourism entrepreneurs. Licin Village is also known as one of the stopover villages to get to Ijen Crater Tour. The existence of the beauty of the Blue fire that is in the Ijen crater also makes this city an attractive tourist destination, because blue fire or blue fire is very rare even in the world there are only two countries. The Banyuwangi regional government has also played an active role in carrying out cultural festivals since 2012. In 2018, there were 77 Banyuwangi Festival events held every weekend (Priyasidarta, 2018). While in 2019 the number of festivals to be displayed will increase to 99 festival events (banyuwangibagus.com, 2019)

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In Indonesian society, the differentiation of positions formed by social construction can still be seen. Men and women have different positions on various aspects, economic, political and social and cultural. The traditional view constructs Indonesian women in a variety of myths. First, the creation myth has regarded women as male helpers. This myth is expressed by government political statements that position men as the head of the family (Murniati, 2004: 45). Society has the notion that the main task of women is to serve their husbands. Second, the beauty myth is one of the myths about female stereotypes. Women are required to be able to beautify themselves and look attractive. But on the other hand, there is also an assumption that when a woman beautifies herself is an attempt to attract the attention of a man.

The third myth is the myth of women as the mother of the nation. This myth teaches about the responsibilities of mothers, the role or dual burden of women in the family (Murniati, 2004: 45). This can result in a higher workload for women, and is often strengthened and is caused by the perception or belief in society that work is considered by the community as a type of "women's work", such as domestic work, considered and underestimated compared to the type of work considered as " men's work ", and categorized as" not productive "so it is not counted in the country's economic statistics (Fakih, 2003: 21).

The assumption that women are irrational or emotional so that women can

not appear to lead, resulting in the emergence of attitudes that put women in positions that are not important. In Java, women used to be not expected to get higher education for traditional assumption that women belong in the kitchen (Fakih, 2003: 15). This is contrary to the opinion of Plato, as the first philosopher who paid attention to the role of women in social life. According to Plato, women are naturally weaker than men but that does not mean all things are only aimed at men. Women have the same rights as men to get an education, both in the fields of philosophy (including moral education), music, medicine, and art. Women also have the opportunity to work in any field including the army, because the task of maintaining the security of the policy is the obligation of all citizens including women (Widy N, 2004: 11).

The issue of gender equality is inseparable from the debate over the concept of gender which is divided into theories of nature and nurture. The theory of nature sees that the differences between women and men are natural so it cannot be changed, and it is universal. Meanwhile, nurture theory explains that in essence the differences between men and women due to the cultural construction so that it produces different roles and tasks for both of them (Sasongko, 2009: 17-18).

Changes in the dynamic social life of society also affected the construction of men and women in Indonesia. The greater the opportunity for women to enter secondary education or superior education, and have a fixed-paying job, and thus the greater the opportunity to enter the public sector (Bourdieu, 2010: 125). In urban communities, the exchange of roles between men and women in domestic life is common. Women can be part of the domestic and public sectors together as an effort to prove independence and self-actualization carried out by women in urban areas. In addition, the demands of the economic motives of urban communities also take into consideration the opportunities for women to carry out double workloads (Kusuma, 2018).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. The study of phenomenology aims to find out the world from the perspective of people experiencing it directly or related to the nature of human experience, and the meaning attached to it (Kuswarno, 2009 : 36). Data collection techniques were carried out by researchers by in- depth interviews of informants who are housewives as well as a female entrepreneur who lives in the village of Licin, Licin sub-district, Banyuwangi Regency represents the area of rural communities.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Development of Village Tourism and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs**

In the past, community activities in rural areas tended to be done in groups. Their life systems are grouped based on a sense of family. Rural people generally

live in agriculture (Soekanto, 2002 : 153). Rosenfeld (1985) said the pattern of family consumption on agricultural land now reflects the pattern of urban families (Ollenburger, Moore, 2002 :118) This is also found in several rural areas in Indonesia. At present, farming is not the only livelihood of rural communities. Trade became an alternative for them.

Licin is a name of a village located in Banyuwangi which is geographically located on the slope of the Mount Ijen, located 15 km from the central government district of Banyuwangi, or with a distance of approximately 30 minutes. The topography of the Licin Village is 18 km from the coastline with an altitude of 300-400 MDPL with rainfall of 300-400 mm and a temperature of 18-28 degrees. The development of tourism in the village of Licin influences the shift in types of livelihoods carried out by the local community. Previously, the majority of local people worked as farmers and farm laborers in rice fields and coffee plantations and palm trees. At present, they also have other businesses that can support the local village tourism sector.

*"Agricultural land is no longer just planted with rice, so farm laborers who are farming are also reduced" [Nurul, 35 years old]*

The development of material culture, the level of technological discovery and innovation, and the improvement of transportation and communication facilities, and the widespread industrialization and urbanization are the drivers of family change. (Khairuddin, 2008 : 109). For the people of the Licin village, Licin sub-district, Banyuwangi district, the development of tourism is the main cause of the change in the concept of family in their village.

Workers on agricultural land and plantations in the village of Licin are still dominated by men. The decrease of paddy farming land is one of the causes of the reduction in the number of women farmers or farm laborers in the rice planting and harvesting season. Women tend to do their daily activities with gardening in their yard or yard, as well as planting beans, ginger, cassava, oyster mushrooms, and others. Furthermore, the results of the plantations in her yard will be used for a food ingredient to be sold.

In English literature, farmers and peasants have different meanings. Farmer is understood as a farmer who possesses adequate production factors with relatively large agricultural land, accumulates a surplus of his farming business so that he has a relatively strong model and has a network with elites (political, religious and economic) (Damsar, Indrayani, 2016: 114). While the term peasant will be more appropriate given to the dominance of the Licin village community. They are farmers who master a few factors of production such as land, and agricultural products are only used to meet and meet the needs of themselves and their families.

Without leaving the agricultural sector, they also work in the trade sector. Lodging business and all forms of accommodation and transportation services are their main priorities at this time. This also influences the role of housewives who previously only worked in the domestic sector, to also participate in the public

sector. Women by their nature have the potential to develop the traits needed following their choices about family and work (Sadli, 2010 : 14)

All research informants gave reasons that their participation in the public sector was because there were opportunities and of course the demands of the family's economic needs. The many cultural festivals organized by the local government certainly provide good opportunities for the local community. The presence of local or foreign tourists visiting the village opens business opportunities for local village women, especially in the culinary field.

*"If tourists want to go to Ijen, go through here, we will try to get them to stop by and buy food or souvenirs here" [Pipit, 29 years old]*

The cultural festival in Banyuwangi is known to have started since 2012. Licin Village is one of the villages that routinely holds a traditional food festival which namely "Festival Jajanan Jadoel" on weekends, for the past six months. This village is one of the villages for tourists who want to climb Mount Ijen. Even so, on average the informants explained that she had started her culinary business in the last five years, outside her village.

The culinary business carried out by women in this village is an effort to support the use of existing village potential. Besides that, the culinary business in this village is prioritizing traditional food as an effort to reintroduce local specialties and market snacks, which are already less popular with factory processed foods. In addition to the culinary business, they also develop a local typical batik craftsman business.

Some informants explained that they started their business when their children were at school age so their workload was lighter because the children could learn independently or could even help. An informant who is a housewife and also trades in front of her house admitted that she started selling because she saw many tourists coming to her village. First, she was selling only to fill in spare time, but when the number of tours that were present increased and this gave a decent profit and income for the family's economy, the husband allowed it.

*"First, for fun, to fill spare time. Because there is an income for my family, so the husband is allowed to sell in front of the house." [Chusnul, 28 years old]*

Selling in front of the house is a daily activities that according to her does not interfere with her main responsibilities as a housewife doing work in the domestic sector.

*"In the morning, the important thing is i cook first, prepare the children for breakfast, then when the children go to play or go to scholl, I'll prepare anything that I want to sell." [Nurul, 35 years old]*

Opportunities to open businesses for women in this village are not only taken by women who previously worked as housewives or agricultural laborers. An entrepreneurial effort was also carried out by one of the informants who worked daily as a kindergarten teacher. She sells fast food only at cultural festivals on weekends. She took advantage of this opportunity to fill his free time on Saturday. She also explained that this was done as an effort to participate in enlivening the event in her village.

*"Everyday I am a kindergarten teacher, miss ... I do this to fill up spare time on Saturdays only, to enliven while looking for additional income" [Ina, 29 years old]*

She further explained that she was going to prepare what to sell had been done in advance. This is done as one of the strategies to be able to carry out the double workload as a woman as well as possible. A double workload will not result in women's discrimination against if the woman carries out her responsibilities happily without pressure from anyone.

*"... because the sale is only once a week, miss.. i has been prepared all of this from Friday ... the salted fish has been prepared to dry in the sun for one day, then the next day it is fried ..." [Ina, 29 years old]*

Unlike the previous informant who made the business as a side activity or additional work only. One of the researcher informants who opened a restaurant of Ayam Lodho Banyuwangi explained that the business opportunity that she took to develop a village chicken farm owned by her own family. She also serves catering orders for weddings or other events.

Culinary is a type of business that attracts attention for urban and rural women. The types of culinary businesses do by women have a closeness to domestic work in the domestic sector that they often do. This makes it easier for women to divide their time between domestic work and business activities without having to go far away from home.

### **The Challenges for Women Entrepreneurs in the Village**

Some observers of women's problems state that the lives of many women in the world have long been shackled in a patriarchal society which makes women often accept their lives as predestined fates so they don't dare to question or change them. Rowe (2001) said that the reason for women's difficulties in achieving achievement as often achieved by men in the world of work is because of 1) low self-motivation, 2) anxiety to succeed, 3) low ability, 4) the existence of external factors (Kuntjara, 2012 : 154-157)

The women's empowerment program is an effort to place women as equals

to men. According to M. Payne, empowerment aims to help people gain power in making decisions and actions on their lives by reducing the effects of social and personal obstacles (Damsar, Indrayani, 2016: 242). Women are a significant development resource. Women's empowerment needs to be done through capacity building and self-confidence especially for women in rural areas. Thus it is expected that village women will have the power to participate also in village development activities.

Women are a huge development resource. Some of the women's empowerment programs in development are aimed at; 1) increasing the ability of women to involve themselves in development programs, 2) increasing the ability of women in leadership, 3) increasing the ability of women to manage household-scale businesses (home industries), small industries, or large industries, 4) increasing the role and functions of women's organizations (Nugroho, 2008 : 164)

Women have great potential to participate in providing income for families. Entrepreneurship can be considered as one solution to involve women in the public sector, but without ignoring their responsibilities in the domestic sector. The business that is done by women in the village of Licin is done from home. They produce food that will be selling in front of homes.

One informant developed the cultivation of oyster mushrooms in her yard. The oyster mushroom harvest can be sold raw or used as food ingredients. If sold as a processed food typical of the local area, of course, it can provide a higher selling value than having to be sold raw. In the village of Licin, chips and mushroom bread derived from oyster mushrooms become one of the typical souvenirs of the village which is much in demand by tourists. Dried foods such as chips and bread should have great potential not only for trading in the Licin village itself but also outside the village.

*"There are chips with bread from oyster mushrooms that are durable and can be carried with foreign tourists who come here, so they are typical snacks from Licin" [Isna, 55 years old]*

Nevertheless, marketing constraints are still faced by women entrepreneurs in the village. The first obstacle is related to the mastery of foreign languages. Licin Village is a transit route before heading to the blue fire tourist attraction on Mount Ijen. As one of the famous tourist attractions in foreign countries, the presence of foreign tourists is a challenge and opportunity for them. Difficulty in foreign languages makes them forced to use a foreign language to communicate when they are buying and selling.

*"If the tourist wants to buy something, it confused me on how to replay what they said, sometimes I use body language ... but sometimes there is a guide to help me" [Chusnul, 28 years old]*

Especially in the current digital era, rural women are not only limited to

doing work oriented to production by her self but also provide an opportunity to be able to improve their skills to expand the business area in the field of promotion and marketing like the food product industry in urban areas.

An entrepreneur is required to have creativity and innovation. There are three basic principles of an entrepreneur: innovativeness, innovativeness, and innovativeness! Starting with innovative thinking, making innovative choices, making innovative products and services, marketing innovatively, and making the lives of people who use their products innovative (Nugroho, 2015: 76). Innovative thinking is not only needed by a woman entrepreneur in creating at the production stage, but also in marketing to distribution activities.

In the digital era, the role of the internet is also increasingly influencing business processes. The business will be more efficient and effective in reaching wider markets. The internet is not just a promotional tool but can be an infrastructure that supports the smooth running of business processes (Awaluddin, 2016 : 122). The ability to use online media by business people can make it easier to open market opportunities and connect with a wider range of potential customers without leaving home. Some online media that are popular and can be used by businesses to promote products or services include Facebook, Instagram, blogs, WhatsApp and Line.

Of all the research informants, there is only one informant who has used online media to promote the products that she sold, which is herbal products. He uses WhatsApp to promote his herbal products to his family and closest friends. Obstacles to the limited reach of potential customers are also one of the obstacles he encountered.

*"I use WhatsApp, miss.. but it is limited, so it still relies on sales in the market or entrusted to stores" [Isna, 55 years old]*

Even for sending products, sometimes she still has difficulty in the time and administrative processes of shipping. On the other hand, other informants claimed that the constraints of technological prowess and time were the main problems in utilizing online media.

## **CONCLUSION**

The changes in social conditions in rural communities affect the shift in the concept of division of roles in a family in the village. Women in rural areas are no longer only responsible for the domestic sector, but also have opportunities to enter the public sector. Women in rural areas have the same opportunities to become women entrepreneurs as women in urban areas. It's just some of the challenges they have to face include production and marketing problems. The limited economic support makes the types of businesses occupied by women in the village not diverse, giving a tendency to do home- based food culinary businesses in a quantity that is not large or limited. Also, a lack of knowledge about the importance of



marketing that can reach consumers beyond is found in women's business activities in the village. They sell only in the surrounding area. They have not been able to see business opportunities that can be obtained in the digital era such as the use of online media, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Line and so on.

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