

Development of Women's Empowerment in Building Sustainable Entrepreneurship at Jembarwangi Village: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of women's empowerment through entrepreneurship in addressing economic and environmental challenges in Jembarwangi Village, West Java, a key cultivation area for the Gedong Gincu mango. Despite the region's potential as a major exporter, local farmers face economic limitations due to surplus production and post-harvest waste. To mitigate these issues, a women-led initiative has been introduced to process surplus mangoes into value-added products like mango chips. The findings emphasize the importance of collective action, technical support, and access to wider markets in sustaining rural entrepreneurship. Additionally, the study highlights the social and cultural impacts of women's economic participation, including shifts in gender roles and increased self-confidence. Theoretical implications suggest that rural women's entrepreneurship enhances economic resilience. Practical applications of the findings indicate the need for sustained support, including training and market integration, to ensure the long-term success of such ventures. This research contributes to the literature on gender-inclusive rural development and entrepreneurship, demonstrating the potential for women in rural areas to drive local economic growth through innovative use of local resources and modern entrepreneurial practices.

Keywords

Women's Empowerment, Women's Entrepreneurship, Jembarwangi Sumedang, Mango Chip, Rural Indonesia

1. Introduction

Jembarwangi Village, located in Tomo District, Sumedang Regency, West Java, is a key cultivation area for the Gedong Gincu mango, a fruit renowned for its distinctive aroma, vibrant red color, and high fiber content. These qualities have positioned the Gedong Gincu mango as a sought-after export commodity, with high demand in both domestic and international markets, particularly in Japan (Sumantri 2021). The geographic conditions of the area, characterized by flat terrain and an average of 75 rainy days per year, create optimal conditions for mango cultivation, resulting in improved fruit quality and yield (Sumedang 2024). However, despite the promising agricultural potential, the economic benefits for local farmers remain limited. Research indicates that the economic evolution of Gedong Gincu production in Sumedang has not proportionally improved farmers' income, highlighting a disparity between the production potential and the economic outcomes for small-scale producers (Muftiadi et al. 2023). This situation suggests structural weaknesses in the local economy, as the substantial mango production does not translate into increased financial stability for farmers.

One of the key challenges faced by Jembarwangi Village during the harvest season is the surplus production of mangoes that fail to meet quality standards for both export and domestic markets (Sikki, N. et al. 2024). These substandard mangoes, classified as Grade Ab1 for export and Grade Ab2 for local markets, are often left unsold, leading to significant waste. It is estimated that a considerable portion of the harvest is discarded, resulting in both economic losses for the farmers and environmental risks due to the decomposition of unsold mangoes, which can contaminate soil and water sources (Sikki, N et al., 2024). The presence of such waste not only highlights inefficiencies

in post-harvest management but also underscores the need for innovative approaches to mitigate waste and enhance the economic utilization of surplus produce.

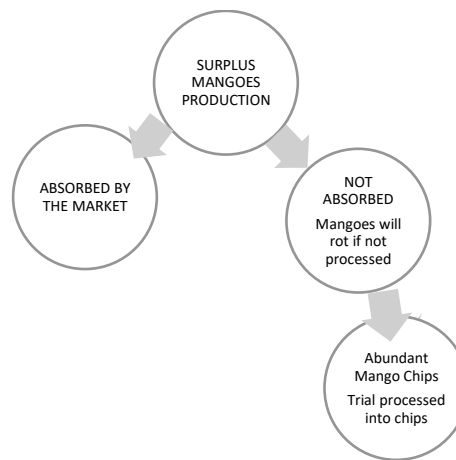


Figure 2. Framework

Source:(Sikki, N et al. 2024)

In response to these challenges, a targeted effort has been made to empower local women by transforming surplus mangoes into value-added products, such as mango chips. Women's empowerment, particularly in rural areas, has gained increasing recognition as a vital driver of sustainable development over the past decade (Fernández et al., 2021). In Jembarwangi Village, women—especially those not directly involved in agricultural activities—have been mobilized to lead the mango chip processing initiative. This initiative offers them an opportunity not only to earn additional income but also to develop entrepreneurial skills, thereby enhancing their social and economic standing within the community (Sikki,N et al. 2024). Nevertheless, several challenges persist, including limited access to capital, inadequate entrepreneurial training, and restricted market reach, all of which hinder the full potential of this initiative (S. K. Ariffin et al. 2021).

The primary objective of this initiative is to develop sustainable entrepreneurship that contributes to both economic empowerment and environmental sustainability. By converting unsold mangoes into commercially viable products, the initiative seeks to reduce waste, improve women's livelihoods, and stimulate the local economy (Sikki, Hersusetyati, et al., 2024). Moreover, by engaging women in business management and decision-making processes, the program fosters a sense of ownership and independence, enabling them to play a more active role in both household and community economics (Sahu et al. 2024). This approach aligns with broader goals of reducing gender disparities in economic participation and fostering inclusive growth models.

Despite the promising opportunities presented by this initiative, several challenges remain. The high demand for processed mango products, both locally and for export, offers significant potential for business growth (udin, abay 2024). However, obstacles such as inadequate financial resources, limited access to entrepreneurial training, and technological constraints continue to impede the success of these women-led businesses (A. S. Ariffin et al. 2020). Additionally, the seasonality of mango production poses further challenges to maintaining consistent production levels throughout the year. This issue highlights the importance of sustained financial and technical support to ensure the long-term viability of the businesses (Sahu et al. 2024). Furthermore, there is a critical need to develop mechanisms that allow these entrepreneurs to navigate the complexities of the market and enhance their competitiveness.

The relevance of empowering women through entrepreneurship extends beyond individual economic benefits. It is a crucial component of achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly in reducing poverty, promoting social cohesion, and advancing gender equality (Fernández et al. 2021). In Jembarwangi Village, the involvement of women in mango chip production not only improves economic resilience by reducing dependence on

seasonal agricultural yields but also provides a more stable source of income. Additionally, by addressing both economic and environmental challenges, the initiative contributes to broader sustainable development goals, particularly in terms of waste reduction and inclusive economic growth (Raman et al. 2022). Women's entrepreneurship is increasingly being recognized as a key factor in driving long-term socio-economic development. However, it requires supportive policies, access to resources, and the removal of structural barriers that have historically limited women's economic participation.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on developing a sustainable entrepreneurship model through women's empowerment in the context of rural agricultural production. While various studies have highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship in empowering women, there remains a gap in understanding how such models can be effectively applied to small-scale, resource-constrained rural settings. This study explores the opportunities and challenges inherent in the mango chip processing initiative in Jembarwangi Village and seeks to understand how similar models could be replicated or scaled in other rural contexts. Furthermore, by integrating gender-inclusive practices into the entrepreneurship process, the initiative serves as a practical example of how sustainable economic growth can be achieved through the active participation of women.



Figure 4. Methods of Implementing the Overall Activity

Source: (Sikki, N., et al. 2024)

In conclusion, the mango chip processing initiative in Jembarwangi Village demonstrates the potential for sustainable entrepreneurship through women's empowerment. By leveraging local resources and addressing challenges in mango production, the initiative offers a viable solution to the economic and environmental issues faced by the community. However, for such initiatives to succeed, there must be continued support in terms of financial resources, entrepreneurial training, and market development. These factors are essential to ensuring that women-led businesses can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the local economy. As global efforts toward sustainable development continue, the empowerment of women in rural economies through entrepreneurship offers a promising model for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Based on the identified challenges and opportunities in women's entrepreneurship in mango chip processing, the following hypothesis will be tested: "Women's empowerment through entrepreneurship in mango chip processing leads to increased household income and community economic resilience, provided that adequate access to capital, entrepreneurial training, and market opportunities are available." This hypothesis aims to explore the impact of entrepreneurial activities led by women on economic outcomes at both household and community levels. It will also assess the role of external support mechanisms—such as financial resources, training programs, and market access—in fostering sustainable economic development through women-led initiatives.

This study focuses on the mango chip processing initiative in Jembarwangi Village and examines the impact of women's empowerment on economic and environmental outcomes. The research is limited to understanding the role of women in post-harvest processing and entrepreneurship, with specific attention given to challenges such as access to capital, skill development, and market expansion. The study aims to provide insights that can inform the development of similar models in other rural agricultural settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment is a critical factor in achieving gender equality and enhancing women's roles in various socio-economic and political spheres. As defined by Sikki and Sedarmayanti (2024), empowerment is a process that enables women to gain control over their lives and participate fully in various fields, including the economic, social, political, and cultural domains. This concept emphasizes the importance of providing women with opportunities that foster independence and self-determination. However, despite the theoretical advancements, practical challenges remain. Banihani (2020), highlights that in Jordan, for example, women entrepreneurs still face significant hurdles, particularly in balancing family responsibilities and navigating societal restrictions on mobility. Similarly, Ariffin et al. (2020) point out that limited access to capital and business skills, along with exclusion from key decision-making processes, continue to undermine women's empowerment in entrepreneurship, reflecting broader global trends of inequality. Fernández et al. (2021) further note that although the number of women entrepreneurs has increased significantly over the past decade, systemic barriers continue to limit the full realization of their potential, particularly in developing economies.

Empowerment is also heavily dependent on financial inclusion. As noted by Sahu et al. (2024) access to microcredit plays a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurship among women. By providing financial resources, microfinance institutions have the potential to transform the economic landscape for women, especially in rural areas. However, Abebe and Kegne (2023) cautions that despite the availability of both financial and non-financial services, microfinance institutions often fail to significantly empower marginalized women. This discrepancy underscores the importance of not only providing resources but also addressing the socio-cultural barriers that impede women's entrepreneurial growth. The limitations of microfinance in achieving broad-based empowerment are further elaborated by Vossenbergh (2013) who points out that women are still less likely than men to engage in entrepreneurial activities globally, due to deep-seated gender disparities that shape their access to resources and decision-making power.

Moreover, the intersection of technology and women's empowerment has gained increased attention, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Raman et al. (2022) illustrates how digitalization and e-commerce present both opportunities and challenges for women entrepreneurs. The pandemic exposed significant gender biases within Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sectors, necessitating gender-sensitive policies to address these imbalances. In this context, interventions that specifically target women's participation in digital markets are essential for leveling the playing field and ensuring that women can fully benefit from emerging economic opportunities. Thus,

while women's empowerment in entrepreneurship has made strides, the persistence of gender-based barriers continues to hinder progress, necessitating more inclusive policies and targeted interventions.

2.2 Building Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Sustainable entrepreneurship involves creating business models that not only generate economic value but also contribute to environmental and social sustainability. Women's participation in this sector is increasingly recognized as vital for fostering inclusive development. According to de Bruin and Swail (2024) entrepreneurship provides women with opportunities to increase income, build social networks, and reduce economic dependency, thereby enhancing their socio-economic status. This perspective aligns with the broader framework of sustainable development, which emphasizes gender equality as a key component in achieving long-term societal well-being. However, as Vukovic et al. (2023) observe, despite the growing recognition of women's roles in entrepreneurship, significant gender disparities persist, particularly in access to finance and market opportunities. These disparities create barriers that hinder women from fully realizing their entrepreneurial potential and contributing to sustainable development goals.

Financial literacy is another critical component of sustainable entrepreneurship. Andriamahery & Qamruzzaman (2022) emphasize the role of financial education in empowering women entrepreneurs by improving their capacity to manage business finances effectively. Enhanced financial literacy not only equips women with the skills necessary to run successful businesses but also strengthens their bargaining power in the market. Nonetheless, as highlighted by Vossenbergh (2013) gender disparities in financial inclusion remain a pervasive issue. Microfinance, while intended to bridge this gap, has often been insufficient in addressing the underlying structural inequalities that women face. This calls for a more holistic approach to entrepreneurship development that incorporates both financial and non-financial support mechanisms, tailored specifically to women's needs.

Furthermore, the sustainability of women-led enterprises is closely linked to innovation and adaptability in business practices. Sikki, Aripin, et al. (2024) argue that businesses that prioritize innovation are more likely to grow and succeed in competitive markets. In this regard, training in digital marketing and product development becomes crucial. As noted by M. N. Sari et al. (2024) women entrepreneurs who leverage digital platforms such as social media and e-commerce are better positioned to expand their market reach and increase profitability. Also about the Consumer perceptions and preferences are also shaped by subjective factors such as personal experiences, recommendations, and exposure to advertisements or promotional events (R. D. Sari, 2023).

However, the challenge remains in ensuring that women, particularly in rural and underserved areas, have access to the necessary tools and training to compete effectively in the digital economy. Addressing these challenges requires not only technical training but also policy support that promotes gender inclusivity in entrepreneurial ecosystems. Thus, sustainable entrepreneurship, particularly for women, hinges on a combination of financial literacy, innovation, and targeted support to overcome the systemic barriers that impede their progress.

In summary, while significant strides have been made in advancing women's empowerment and entrepreneurship, numerous challenges persist. The success of women in entrepreneurial ventures, particularly in achieving sustainability, depends heavily on overcoming the barriers related to financial inclusion, gender bias, and access to resources. Future efforts must focus on creating a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that empowers women through targeted interventions in financial literacy, innovation, and policy reform.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to provide a comprehensive depiction of the role of women in developing small businesses to enhance the economic welfare of their families. A qualitative approach is suitable for exploring social phenomena such as the involvement of women in business, which is influenced by various socio-economic factors and community contexts. As Creswell (2021) suggests, qualitative research allows for a detailed understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions, making it an appropriate methodology for this research. By utilizing this approach, the study aims to capture the real-world challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in rural areas.

3.2 Research Setting

The research was conducted in Jembarwangi Village, located in the Tomo District of Sumedang Regency. The village is known for its production of Gedong Gincu mangoes, a local commodity often left to waste during harvest seasons

due to overproduction. To prevent this waste, the excess mangoes are processed into Gedong Gincu mango chips, a product expected to become a regional icon. This setting was selected because it provides a relevant context for studying how women, particularly the wives of local farmers, contribute to the economy through value-added agricultural products.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study consisted of 10 informants, primarily women involved in the production of Gedong Gincu mango chips. These participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that the selected informants had direct involvement in the business activities under study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals who are particularly knowledgeable or experienced in the area of interest (Bakkalbasioglu, 2020). The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows: (1) women residing in Jembarwangi Village, (2) actively involved in the production or marketing of mango chips, and (3) available to participate in in-depth interviews.

Table 1
Management of the Jembar Motekar Joint Business Group
Jembarwangi Village, Tomo District

No	Nama	Alamat	Kedudukan Dalam Kelompok
1	Eneng Rohanah	Dsn.Cirendang Rt 07/03	Ketua
2	Tita Kusminar	Dsn.Cirendang Rt 02/02	Sekretaris
3	Yusih	Dsn.Cirendang Rt 08/04	Bendahara
4	Nining Ningrum	Dsn.Cirendang Rt 01/02	Anggota
5	Eni Suryani	Dsn.Cirendang Rt 06/03	Anggota
6	Elah	Dsn.Cibengkung Rt 03/01	Anggota
7	Erna	Dsn.Cibengkung Rt 04/01	Anggota
8	Lina Wati	Dsn.Cibengkung Rt 01/01	Anggota
9	Cicih	Dsn.Cibengkung Rt 01/01	Anggota
10	Epi Neti Guniwati	Dsn.Cibengkung Rt 01/01	Anggota

Sumber: (Sikki, N., Zaelani, P. I., Sari, R. D., Kusuma, A. N., Wijaya, W., Putri, C. D. N., ... & Maulana, 2024)

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using a combination of in-depth interviews, observations, and a review of secondary data. This triangulation of data collection methods ensures that the research findings are robust and well-grounded (Creswell, 2021).

- Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant, with open-ended questions allowing them to express their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of their involvement in the business.
- Observations: Observations were conducted during the mango chip production process to gather insights into the roles women play in these activities and to validate the information obtained through interviews.
- Secondary Data: Additional data were gathered through a review of relevant literature on the economic and social conditions of Jembarwangi Village and the broader context of women in entrepreneurship.

All interviews and discussions were conducted in the Sundanese language, and later transcribed and translated into Indonesian to ensure the accuracy of the data for analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis followed a thematic approach, as outlined by Byrne (2022), which involves identifying patterns and themes across the data.

1. Data Preparation: After transcription, the data were organized into an Excel sheet, where each statement was coded using a color-coding technique to categorize similar responses and emerging themes.
2. Coding and Categorization: An affinity diagram was employed to help organize the data into codes, categories, and finally, themes. The main research questions guided the analysis:
 - What challenges did the participants face when producing marketable Gedong Gincu mango chips?
 - How did government and academic support influence production and marketing?
 - What changes did the women experience after participating in entrepreneurship training?

From this process, three key themes emerged: (1) Barriers and Opportunities in setting up a business, (2) Multiple Roles of Women in their households and communities, and (3) the Changing Status of Women Entrepreneurs as a result of their business involvement.

4. RESULT

4.1 Women's Contribution to Family through Entrepreneurship

The results of this study highlight the significant role of women in Jembarwangi Village in supplementing their family's income through small-scale entrepreneurial activities. Interviews with the Jembar Motekar farmer group, consisting of 10 women, revealed that many of these women, who previously had no employment outside their households, now contribute to family finances. Their activities, such as producing cassava chips or running small businesses, aim to reduce the economic burden on their husbands, who are primarily engaged in agriculture. One participant, Mrs. Eneng, emphasized this transformation: "Before this, I would occasionally help my husband in the fields, but now I utilize my free time to meet others and hope to increase my income" (Interview with Mrs. Eneng, September 28, 2024). This entrepreneurial engagement not only diversifies the income sources of these families but also enhances the social and economic standing of women within the community.

The findings align with previous research that highlights the importance of women's participation in micro-enterprises, especially in rural areas, as a means of improving household economic resilience (Ge et al., 2022). In such contexts, entrepreneurship is often seen as a pathway for women to gain financial independence and contribute meaningfully to their communities (Abebe & Kegne, 2023). Moreover, the study reflects the broader trend of women transitioning from traditional roles to active economic contributors, which has been documented in similar rural settings (Shaheen et al., 2022).

4.2 Challenges in Mango Chip Production

Despite the progress made, the participants also reported several challenges related to mango chip production. A recurrent theme in the interviews was the lack of capital for purchasing essential supplies, such as cooking oil and electricity, to scale up production. Mrs. Titin, for instance, expressed her frustration: "We have an abundance of mangoes during peak harvest, but transforming them into chips requires capital, which we do not have" (Interview with Mrs. Titin, September 28, 2024). Furthermore, the vacuum fryer and spinner provided for mango chip processing have remained unused due to the lack of practical training in operating these machines.

These barriers to production resonate with findings from prior studies on rural entrepreneurship, which often identify capital constraints and limited technical skills as key obstacles to the success of small businesses (Bullough et al., 2022). Addressing these challenges would require both financial support and hands-on training to enable women to fully harness the available technology and scale their operations (Sikki & Sedarmayanti, 2024).

4.3 Empowerment and Community Engagement

The empowerment program has provided the women of Jembarwangi Village with new opportunities to actively engage in economic activities, particularly through the production and sale of mango chips. As described by the Head of Gapoktan Jembarwangi, the group successfully sold mango chips to visitors at the Lembar Cisaar Archaeological Museum, and the consumer response was highly positive (Interview with the Head of Gapoktan Jembarwangi, September 28, 2024). This event marks a significant milestone for the community, as it demonstrates the potential of local products to generate income and attract external markets.

The support of local authorities, particularly the female village chief, has been instrumental in the success of this initiative. By issuing a formal decree to establish the Jembar Motekar Joint Business Group, the village leadership has not only encouraged the women to pursue entrepreneurial ventures but also helped solidify the mango chip business as a potential village icon. This dynamic is consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the role of supportive local governance in fostering rural entrepreneurship and women's empowerment (Ge et al., 2022).

4.4 Market Access and Future Prospects

While the production of mango chips has begun to gain traction, the participants expressed concerns about the limited market access for their products. As Mrs. Lina noted, the group is unsure of how to expand their sales beyond local buyers and hopes to eventually sell their products in larger retail outlets such as Alfamart or Indomaret (Interview with Mrs. Lina, August 1, 2024). The lack of established distribution channels highlights the need for strategic marketing initiatives and partnerships with retailers to broaden the reach of these products.

Previous studies on rural product commercialization suggest that market access is a critical factor in the sustainability of small businesses (R. D. Sari et al., 2024). Without access to wider markets, the profitability and growth of such ventures remain limited. To overcome these challenges, targeted interventions such as marketing training and partnerships with larger distribution networks are necessary (M. N. Sari et al., 2024).

4.5 Theoretical Implications

These findings contribute to existing theories of rural entrepreneurship and women's economic empowerment. The entrepreneurial activities of the women in Jembarwangi Village underscore the potential for rural women to engage in economic activities traditionally dominated by men. This aligns with gender empowerment frameworks that advocate for increased agency and decision-making power for women in economic spheres (Kumari, 2020). Furthermore, the challenges they face, such as capital constraints and market access, support the argument that empowerment is not only about providing opportunities but also about addressing systemic barriers (de Bruin & Swail, 2024). The study also enriches the literature on community-driven development, demonstrating that local leadership and external support can significantly influence the success of rural economic ventures. The women's active participation in the mango chip business challenges the traditional narrative of rural women as passive contributors, instead presenting them as proactive entrepreneurs capable of driving local economic growth.

4.6 Practical Applications

In practical terms, the findings of this study offer insights into how similar rural communities can empower women through entrepreneurship. By providing both technical and financial support, local governments can foster the development of small businesses that improve household incomes and enhance community cohesion. For example, training programs on equipment operation and financial management could address the technical challenges identified in this study, while partnerships with retailers could open up new markets for products like mango chips.

This case study from Jembarwangi Village illustrates that with the right support, rural women can transform local resources into profitable ventures. However, the success of such initiatives depends heavily on sustained investment in capacity-building and market integration strategies, as has been suggested by other studies on rural development (Habiyaemye et al., 2020; Phale et al., 2021). By implementing these strategies, rural communities can achieve more sustainable economic growth and greater gender equity.

4.7 Social and Cultural Impacts of Women's Entrepreneurship

Beyond the economic contributions, the involvement of women in entrepreneurship has had notable social and cultural impacts in Jembarwangi Village. The women participating in the mango chip production have reported an increase in self-confidence and social interaction, which was previously limited due to traditional gender roles that confined them to domestic tasks. As Mrs. Eneng mentioned, her involvement in the entrepreneurial activities allowed her to utilize her free time more effectively and foster stronger social ties within the community (Interview with Mrs. Eneng, September 28, 2024). This shift reflects a growing recognition of women's capacity to engage in public and economic life, a significant change in rural societies where women's roles are often restricted to the household. This transformation mirrors the findings of other studies, which have shown that women's participation in economic activities can lead to shifts in gender norms and increased agency in decision-making processes, both at the household and community levels (A. S. Ariffin et al., 2020; Ojediran & Anderson, 2020; Raman et al., 2022; Shaheen et al., 2022). By engaging in income-generating activities, these women not only contribute financially but also gain a sense of purpose and visibility in the public sphere, challenging traditional gender dynamics.

The case of the Jembar Motekar group also demonstrates the value of integrating local knowledge with modern entrepreneurial practices. The women's ability to process and market mango chips is rooted in their deep understanding of the local agricultural landscape and the seasonal cycles of mango production. However, their entrepreneurial activities have been enhanced by the introduction of modern technologies, such as the vacuum fryer

and spinner, and the knowledge gained through training programs. This blend of traditional knowledge and modern techniques has opened new avenues for economic development, as evidenced by their initial success in selling mango chips to external consumers. Research by (Mozumdar et al., 2020) supports the notion that combining local knowledge with modern business practices can lead to innovative solutions that are both economically viable and culturally appropriate. In rural entrepreneurship, this integration allows communities to capitalize on their existing strengths while adopting new methods that improve productivity and marketability. For the women in Jembarwangi, further training in technology use and business management could enhance their capacity to scale their operations and penetrate larger markets.

4.8 The Role of Collective Action in Business Development

An additional theme emerging from the interviews is the importance of collective action in advancing the mango chip business. The establishment of the Jembar Motekar farmer group has provided a platform for the women to share knowledge, pool resources, and support one another in their entrepreneurial ventures. This collaborative approach has not only fostered a sense of community but also enabled them to overcome some of the individual limitations they face, such as a lack of capital or technical skills. As observed in the group's successful sale of mango chips at the Lembar Cisaar Archaeological Museum, collective effort has been a key factor in their early successes (Interview with the Head of Gapoktan Jembarwangi, September 28, 2024).

Collective action in rural entrepreneurship has been widely documented as a powerful tool for overcoming the resource constraints commonly faced by small-scale entrepreneurs. Studies by (Barasa & Nyaga, 2021; Igalla et al., 2020) highlight the role of community-based organizations in mobilizing resources and facilitating business development. The experience of the Jembar Motekar group reinforces these findings, showcasing the potential of collective action in advancing rural women's entrepreneurship.

4.9 Sustainability and Future Development of the Mango Chip Business

The sustainability of the mango chip business in Jembarwangi Village remains a concern, especially with respect to long-term growth and market expansion. The interviews revealed a strong desire among the women to expand their market reach, as they currently face limited demand from local consumers. Mrs. Lina's aspiration to sell their products in larger retail outlets, such as Alfamart or Indomaret, points to the need for strategies that can connect rural products with broader markets (Interview with Mrs. Lina, August 1, 2024). Without such market access, the business risks stagnation, especially during off-peak seasons when the supply of mangoes decreases.

Sustainability in rural entrepreneurship often hinges on access to both financial resources and markets, as noted by (Ge et al., 2022). In this case, efforts to link the Jembar Motekar group with larger distribution channels could be critical to ensuring the long-term viability of their mango chip business. Additionally, there is potential to diversify their product offerings by exploring other uses for mangoes or incorporating different fruits and vegetables, thereby reducing their dependence on seasonal mango harvests.

4.10 Implications for Gender-Inclusive Economic Policies

The success of this initiative in Jembarwangi Village underscores the need for gender-inclusive economic policies that support women's entrepreneurship in rural areas. The active involvement of women in the mango chip business illustrates the untapped potential that rural women hold in contributing to local economies. By investing in women's entrepreneurship, governments and development agencies can help reduce poverty, increase household incomes, and promote gender equality. However, as the interviews highlight, these efforts must go beyond providing initial training or equipment. Sustained support in the form of capacity-building, financial resources, and market access is essential for these businesses to thrive in the long term.

This finding aligns with literature emphasizing the importance of policy frameworks that recognize and address the specific barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in rural settings (Gurbuz & Ozkan, 2020; Semkunde et al., 2022). By implementing gender-sensitive policies, such as targeted financial schemes and training programs, governments can foster an enabling environment for women to succeed as entrepreneurs, leading to broader social and economic development.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the entrepreneurial activities of the Jembar Motekar farmer group highlight the transformative potential of women's involvement in rural economies. Through their participation in mango chip production, these

women have not only contributed to their household finances but have also fostered social cohesion and challenged traditional gender roles. The success of their venture, however, is contingent on addressing key challenges such as capital constraints, market access, and technical training. To ensure the sustainability of these efforts, ongoing support from local authorities and development agencies is crucial. The integration of local knowledge with modern entrepreneurial practices further demonstrates how rural communities can leverage their unique resources to drive economic growth and improve livelihoods.

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