

# Women's Empowerment: Improving Household Economy Through Creativity Based on Bamboo Products in Indonesia

Vadilla Mutia Zahara<sup>1</sup>, Cep Jandi Anwar<sup>2\*</sup>, Stannia Cahaya Suci<sup>3</sup>, Rah Adi Fahmi Ginanjar<sup>4</sup>, Indra Suhendra<sup>5</sup>

Department of Economics, Faculty of Economy and Business, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University, Indonesia

## Abstract:

A prosperous family, in general, is one that can meet its fundamental necessities such as food, clothing, housing, health, and education. At the moment, not only do males contribute to the economic well-being of the family, but women do as well. Especially in the present Covid-19, where household income is anticipated to diminish because to falling demand for products and services. This motivated the women to assist their spouse in improving the economy. Women can assist raise their income through gardening, selling, and honing their skills and creativity to start a new business. The role of women in increasing the family's economic well-being, which requires women to have a skill or ability to improve, could result in a product that could be turned into a new business. However, not all women are eager to learn and try their hand at entrepreneurship. Limited business knowledge is a hurdle for society, particularly for women, who want to create their own businesses. The goal of this project is to move and expand the creativity of rural women so that their skills and creativity can become startups or early ideas for new businesses, which will hopefully help improve the family economy. This project was created in, Serang Banten, Indonesia. The method of implementation will be carried out well by conducting community development in a compelling and informative manner, and mapping connected to commercial interests of village women consisting of women of the region.

**Key words:** Women's Empowerment, Household Economy, Bamboo Product, Skill and Creativity

## Introduction

The economy is a factor that can affect welfare in community life. In general, the economic condition of a region is said to be prosperous can be reflected in the healthy economic condition of the family. A family is said to be prosperous if it can meet its basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, health, education, religion, environmental interactions, and roles in society (BKKBN 2015). Currently, not only the head of the family in this case is a man who plays a role in the economic welfare of the family, but women also have a role in helping the family's economic welfare condition. Especially in the current Covid-19 conditions where family income tends to decline, due to falling demand for goods and services. This makes the village women want to help their husbands in improving the family economy. Women can help increase income starting from participating in gardening, trading, and by honing their skills and creativity to create a new business with economic value (Tindangen et al. 2020). In addition, according to (Smith 2015) women's contribution to the family economy through activities in a market or occupation makes them important players in labor diversification/ livelihood.

This significant income loss occurs almost all over the world, including in Indonesia, both in urban and rural areas, various sectors are affected, one of which is the agricultural sector, even though the agricultural sector in Indonesia is one of the Important sectors in the movement of the Indonesian economy, (Smith 2015) and (Rasheed et al. 2020) in their research explained that agriculture is an important engine for economic growth and a strong driver in Reducing poverty, especially in developing countries. One area where the community is dominated by farmers is in Pasuluhan Serang Village. This area has felt the impact of Covid 19, which has resulted in a decrease in agricultural activities, which consequently has an impact on decreasing agricultural yields.

**Table 1. Data Type of Work of The Head of Family**

Type of Work	Result	Percentage (%)
Civil Servant	23	3.70
Army	3	0,48
Police	3	0.48
Farmworker	321	51.77
Retail	110	17.74

Crafter	136	21.93
Mechanic	6	0.94
Cattleman	17	2.74
Service Sectors	1	0.16

Source: Survey Data 2021

Most of the villages work in agriculture and plantations. This is supported by geographical conditions dominated by plantations and rice fields. Pasuluhan Village is a village that is very large in agricultural land and plantations, therefore most of the livelihoods of Pasuluhan Village residents are farmers, not only that, the livelihood of the community, some work as craftsmen / handicrafts. The Pasuluhan community, most of whom make a living as farmers, bamboo craftsmen, and traders, have felt the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, not a few of the heads of families who quit their work activities due to the covid-19 pandemic. In addition, declining production and harvesting accompanied by declining sales of goods, made people's income also decrease. Based on previous observations in Pasuluhan Village, Walantaka Serang District, Banten, most of the women in Pasuluhan Village are active as housewives who do not have income, so that when the current COVID-19 pandemic occurs, the main income to support the family depends on the husband's income, which is currently declining.

As for women who have worked before, namely as TKW (Women Workers) or factory workers. Women prefer to become migrant workers to earn more income for their children and husbands in the village. According to one of the villagers, in Pasuluhan village those who work to meet household needs are women/ wives as migrant workers in other countries. However, it is undeniable, women who choose to become migrant workers, lose their role and time as a wife and housewife (Kumalasari 2011) Therefore, alternative businesses are needed so that women can still contribute to the economic welfare of the family, but can still carry out their roles as a wife and housewife. Women who work not only to fill their spare time, but also they want to improve their own and family's standard of living. According to (Aswiyati 2016) that women in rural areas work not solely to fill their spare time or develop careers, but to earn a living because their husband's income is said to be insufficient so that many women or housewives work. If the husband's income is less to meet daily needs, it is undeniable that there is a role that must be done by women other than domestic work. (Rizkia, N 2017)

Based on data from Pasuluhan sub-district and previous observations in carrying out community service activities in the 2019-2020 assisted villages, the potential resources in the village are mostly agriculture, plantations, and handicrafts, especially bamboo. This is the initial capital to be able to develop the potential of the village through its superior sector to open new opportunities, especially for women to take part in improving the family economy. This is also in line with the local government's plan with the division of the Serang City area (WP) as stated in the RPI2JM Document for the Cipta Karya PU Sector, Pasuluhan Village and Walantaka District Area will become areas for the development of dryland industrial and agricultural areas (Banten Provincial Government in 2017, 2017)

Table 2. Rural Resource Potential

Resource Potential	Result
Agriculture and Farming	Rice, Vegetables, Fruits
Farm	Chickens, ducks, goats and cows
Craftsman and Hand craft	Bamboo basic material crafts (Broom, Fan, Basket) and other handicrafts.

Bamboo products are one of the many products produced from Pasuluhan village which have the potential to become regional superior products, but the results of this product have only been marketed to markets around the area around the village. In addition, the bamboo products produced do not yet have a high selling value, so it is necessary to introduce the use of technological aspects to increase the selling value of a product. A business needs to carry out various innovations and product diversification and be able to adapt to technological developments such as *E-Commerce*, so as to capture a larger market (Ge et al. 2022), (Ramdanyah, A.D, Zahara, V.M, Suci 2020) besides that according to (Duwi et al. 2019) There needs to be diversification in a product so that the results become an added value. The role of women to participate in improving family economic welfare requires village women to have *the skills* or ability to improve to produce a product that can be used as a new business (Kurniawanto and Anggraini 2019) However, not all village women are willing to learn and try entrepreneurship. Limited insight into business is an obstacle for the community, especially women starting businesses.

Based on this background, the issue that becomes the top priority is the empowerment of creativity based on regional superior products whose main target is women with a focus on implementation, aspects of human resource empowerment to improve the economy and family welfare. Referring to the analysis of the situation, the formulation of the problem includes (1) What are the problems and constraints of women in Pasuluhan Village and their relation to improving the family economy? (2) How to increase the understanding, motivation, creativity and *skills* of rural women for entrepreneurship through the development of regional leading sectors? (3) How do rural women contribute to improving the family economy?

Based on the concept of human resource empowerment, empowerment can be defined as an effort to empower humans through change and human development itself including in the form of *competency*, confidence, authority and responsibility in the range of implementation of various organizational activities as an effort to improve performance (*performance*) expected (Hasan Basri 2000). In addition, empowerment according to Caver and Clatter Back (1995) in (Risianti 2006) is an effort to provide courage and opportunities for someone to be responsible individually as an effort to increase courage and contribute to organizational goals. The essence of empowerment according to (Shardlow 1998) is to discuss how individuals, groups, and communities try to control their own lives and try to plan and shape the future according to what they expect.

The concept of empowerment has more than one dimensional meaning. The dimensions that are clearly visible are the absolute well-being of women and the relative well-being of women (Rahman 2021). In absolute welfare, women's empowerment is considered as a process of improving women's well-being demonstrated by results that measure the current status regarding literacy, health and nutrition, labor force participation, contraceptive use, mobility and ownership of clothing and assets. For relative welfare, women's empowerment is seen as a process of improving women's position relative to men in the household as indicated by women's involvement in intra-household processes such as decision-making, control over household income and assets, and loans taken (Ali and Hatta 2012)

From some of these concepts, empowerment refers to an effort to mobilize individuals, especially vulnerable and weak groups, to provide access to various productive sources that allow them to try to increase their income and obtain the goods and services needed. The vulnerable and weak groups referred to in this case are economically weak groups, rural communities, fishing communities and farmers, which include women. In terms of gender, women are groups that are vulnerable to discrimination, violence, and economic marginalization as a result of the social construction of society towards gender, namely men and women (Sulistiyowati 2016).

### **The Role of Women in Improving the Family Economy through Superior Bamboo Products**

In general, the economic condition of a region is said to be prosperous reflected in the healthy economic condition of its people, which in this case is included in the economy of a family. A family is said to be prosperous if it can meet its basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, health and various other basic needs. Not only men as the head of the family play a role in supporting the family economy, but women also have a role to improve the family economy. One of the efforts of women to contribute to the family economy is by working. Utilizing their abilities or skills, women work in various sectors, both agriculture, plantations, trade to the handicraft industry sector. In her research entitled *The role of women in the use of the agricultural sector*, (Bertham, Ganefianti, and Andani 2011) explained, the reasons women choose to work as farmers include the desire to help their husbands in increasing family income driven by the burden factor of family dependents which is also getting bigger. The contribution of peasant women's income to family income in general is moderate, with a contribution range of 40% – 59% of total family income. This condition can be a woman's strength to participate in decision-making in her household, so that the existence of women in the family becomes more important and valued. In addition, in a study (Susanti and Mas'udah 2017) which raised the theme of the model of women's empowerment in the household industry in East Java Province, it shows that women home industry workers show a multi-*'burden'* role, workers in the home sector have more flexible working hours and no specific educational competencies are needed, besides that in terms of income, income in this sector is relatively low but the contribution To the family economy is very important. Research (Wahyu Nugraheni 2012) in Bedono Village on fisherwomen, it was explained that fisherwomen play a role as housewives (domestic), fisherwomen in Bedono Village also play a role and participate in earning a living for the economic fulfillment of their families. Gender bias in family economic life has seemed blurred because wives are also required to provide for the family. The wife's participation in improving family welfare in Bedono village is manifested in the household environment, in the economic field, and in the community. Through the use of regional leading sectors engaged in small cottage industries, women in villages can use their skills to seek additional income and increase networks between workers and managers, so that village women are more empowered. Regarding the network formed in the cottage industry, there are three types of networks including, 1) networks between managers or owners and workers who are familial, 2) networks established between managers and local governments, namely in terms of marketing and training, 3) networks with the private sector are established in terms of access to capital and business development; no network has been formed between women managers or workers in cottage industries;

### **Materials and Methods**

The research method used is to identify problems and solutions, it is necessary to use qualitative descriptive methods using data analysis techniques such as case study methods, ultrasound (*Urgency, Seriousness and Growth*), and *fishbone diagram* methods. This research was conducted by the author for 6 months (April – September) during the implementation of community service in the village, namely in Nangka Bugang Village, Pasuluhan Village, Walantaka District, Serang Regency, Banten. The data taken came from the original or first source, namely 50 female respondents of Pasuluhan Serang Banten village who attended the training.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **Observations**

Before carrying out community service and research, observation was first carried out by conducting site surveys, interviews with several village officials and communities in the neighborhood. Based on the results of observation or *brainstorming* by discussing and taking temporary samples from 40 village communities and several village officials, the problems that can be identified from the village include:

1. Society, especially women, does not have jobs.
2. Village women are less creative and do not have special *skills* / expertise to develop regional superior products
3. Regional superior products (bamboo) are not innovative

### Analysis of Ultrasound Methods

Based on the results of *Brainstorming* and situation analysis conducted previously with teams and development economics students who held activities in the Assisted Village and Pasuluhan Community of Walantaka District, Serang Regency, using ultrasound analysis (*Urgency, Seriously and Growth*), the following problems were obtained:

Table 3. USG Analysis Method

No	Problem	U	S	G	Total	Rank
1	People, especially women, are employed	3	5	3	9	3
2	<b>Rural Women are less onnovative and lack the specialized skills and knowledge required for producing regionally superior products.</b>	5	4	5	14	1
3	A regional superior product (Bamboo) is not innovative	3	3	4	10	2

Based on USG analysis, it is known that the priority issue chosen is the problem of rural women who are less creative and do not have special *skills* / expertise to develop regional superior products to improve women's economy.

### Fishbone Method Analysis

Priority issues are then analyzed in more depth using *fishbond diagrams*. *Fishbond analysis* is a structured approach that allows a more detailed analysis of the causes of problems and discrepancies (Gaspersz 2002) (Hamidy 2016), can be seen in the following figure1.

Based on the results of the root cause analysis, several root causes of priority issues are known, including:

- a. *Material*, the material aspect of the root of the problem that arises is low and even decreased public income, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic
- b. *Man Power*, people's understanding of entrepreneurship tends to be low, and lack of public motivation to want to do entrepreneurship
- c. *Method*, lack of business assistance for the community, especially rural women
- d. *Machine*, the use of digital marketing and *online* applications has not been maximized, due to the lack of public understanding related to digital marketing

Based on the *fishbone* diagram, the author finds the root of the problem that causes the need for women's empowerment activities to improve skills through the development of regional superior products which are ultimately expected to improve the family economy. The root of the problem that occurs includes aspects of *Material, Man power, Method* and *Machine*. The next step is to use *gap analysis*.

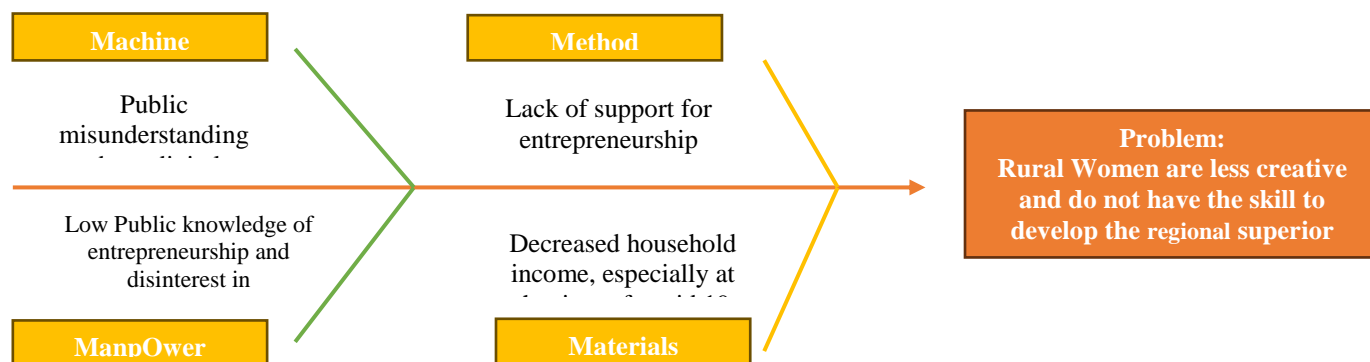


Figure 1. Fish bond Diagram Analysis

### Gap Analysis and Solution

In this problem, the gap that occurs is consumer expectations for services, which in this case is the satisfaction of rural communities in terms of implementing village women's empowerment activities to improve the *skills* and creativity of rural women through the potential of regional leading sectors. Based on the problems that have been explained, this service and research activity is carried out to overcome the problems of rural women related to the economy.

Based on the results of the identification of problems in Pasuluhan Village and the results of observations of community service activities that have been carried out previously. Some solutions that can be done to solve priority problems for rural communities are managerial aspects, marketing/distribution technology aspects and aspects of increasing technological capacity (Production Process) (Zahara, Sanusi, and Suci 2020) as follows:

Table 4. Solutions, Targets and Methods

No	Activity Objectives	ProgramMethods	Partner Participation	Types of Implementations
1	Increased understanding of rural women entrepreneurship and Increased motivation entrepreneurship	of <i>Community development</i> and community (Providing toby showing inspirational videos of village women's success in entrepreneurship)	Participants listen and are actively involved in conveying opinions and motivation in conveying conditions that occur	Human Resources Aspect
2	Increasing understanding of village women digitalization aspects marketing village superior products (Bamboo)	of <i>Community development</i> and superior (Education and Tutorials / Direct practice on digital marketing)	Participants listen and practice Educational digitalization	Technological marketing aspect
3	Rural women's understanding of the picture of increasing income in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic	's <i>Community development</i> and (Provide overview and tips on managing good finances)	Participants listen and are actively involved in conveying opinions and informative in conveying conditions that occur	Managerial Aspects
4	Improving the skills expertise of village women start new businesses	/ <i>Mapping, Community development</i> Persuasive expertise to find suitable and accordance creativity	Participants were recorded by the committee regarding interests and hobbies. Participants expressed their opinions regarding interest in starting a new business. with	Human Resources Aspect

#### 1. Technology and Marketing Aspects

The people of Panyuluhan Village, especially women, do not really understand about the use of technology in online product marketing. For people who are active as bamboo craftsmen, they only market their products to nearby markets or from house to house around the village and eilayah Walantaka District, as a result the marketing reach of bamboo products is not comprehensive in the Serang Regency and outside Serang Regency. The solution offered to this problem is, partners need to market their products online with training in using social media, marketing through *e-commerce* and several online applications, and creating a special *partner website*. In addition, partners are taught how to package products to be more attractive, by making attractive packaging designs.

#### 2. Human Resources Aspect

The large number of people, especially rural women who do not have jobs and inactivities, as well as the lack of knowledge of the community about innovation and new business ideas, make the community quite lagging behind other rural communities, which has an impact on community income and village human resource development. The solution offered is to provide education and motivation so that the mindset of the community changes to be more advanced and willing to be entrepreneurial, by explaining what benefits are obtained in the long term, if the community wants to be entrepreneurial and develop their business.

### 3. Managerial Aspects

During the *COVID-19 pandemic*, people's income also decreased, due to a decrease in demand for agricultural products and bamboo crafts. The solution offered from this activity plan is to conduct coaching and mentoring on how the community remains productive and creative in managing family finances through community business assistance.

### Conclusion

This study explains the role of women in improving the family economy, especially women who are in rural areas. The findings from this study provide new insights and practical implications to be able to encourage women in rural areas to further develop their creativity and abilities in various fields to improve their family's economy, so that it is hoped that their family welfare will increase, especially during Covid 19 and after Covid 19. One Solution found in this study is to turn the hobbies and abilities of each female cadre in the countryside into new business fields and form new entrepreneurship. Because women's entrepreneurship in village cadres plays an important role that is indispensable in solving economic inequality and creating new jobs. The expected implication is that female cadres in the village are motivated to develop their business, especially in the field of bamboo crafts to be able to compete in the current digital economy era. Suggestions that can be given for the implementation of community service, research, and sustainable programs in Pasuluhan Serang Banten Village include: Need to follow up on the results mapping of women's business interest in Pasuluhan Village. It is necessary to carry out further training related to increasing the creativity/skills of village women. Local government support and investors are needed for the development of regional superior product innovations.

In addition to the government's role, the important role of the private sector and universities is to stimulate women's entrepreneurial activities, especially in rural areas in the form of business capital support which can later be used to develop businesses that have been undertaken before, following their interests and expertise. One of the problems faced by women in rural areas is limited financial considerations, besides that the problem of unavailability of jobs for women is an obstacle for women to play an active role in improving the welfare of their families. Therefore, the government's role needs to pay attention to the factors that limit women from running a business. This will create a multiplier effect for various aspects, both for the female cadres themselves, for increased welfare, and the effect on the local environment, and it is hoped that this will give rise to new businesses or start-up companies. Women and creating a suitable environment for entrepreneurship contributes to the reduction of societal poverty. In addition, the policy implications are directly related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 Gender Equality and SDG 8 related to decent work and economic growth.

### References

1. Ali, Isahaque, and Zulkarnain A. Hatta. 2012. "Women's Empowerment or Disempowerment through Microfinance: Evidence from Bangladesh." *Asian Social Work and Policy Review* 6 (2): 111–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-1411.2012.00066.x>.
2. Aswiyati, beautiful. 2016. "The Role of Women in Supporting the Economy of Traditional Farmer Family Households for Poverty Reduction in Kuwil Village, Kalawat District." *Holistic Journal*.
3. Bertham, Yudhy Harini, Dwi Wahyuni Ganefianti, and Apri Andani. 2011. "The Role of Women in the Family Economy by Utilizing Agricultural Resources." *AGRISEP Journal* 10 (1): 138–53. <https://doi.org/10.31186/jagrisep.10.1.138-153>.
4. BKKBN. 2015. "National Population and Family Planning Agency Strategic Plan 2015-2019." *National Population and Family Planning Board*.
5. Duwi, Icha, Meidha Sari, Pipit Eka Septiani, Ulvi Atika Suri, and Husniati Salamah. 2019. "Empowerment of Coastal Women in Realizing Krumi Village to Improve the Economy of Bendar Village." *DYNAMICIA, Journal of Community Service*.
6. Gaspersz, V. 2002. *Total Quality Management*. Jakarta (ID): Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
7. Ge, Taoan, Jaffar Abbas, Raza Ullah, Azhar Abbas, Iqra Sadiq, and Ruilian Zhang. 2022. "Women's Entrepreneurial Contribution to Family Income: Innovative Technologies Promote Females' Entrepreneurship Amid COVID-19 Crisis." *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (March). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.828040>.
8. Hamidy, Fikri. 2016. "Fishbone Analysis Approach to Measure Performance of E-Cooperative Information Business Processes." *Journal of Technoinfo* 10 (1): 11. <https://doi.org/10.33365/jti.v10i1.12>.
9. Hasan Basri. 2000. *Quality Adolescents: Adolescent Problems and Their Solutions*. Yogyakarta: Student Library.
10. Kumalasari, L. 2011. "TkW Family Harmony in Gender Perspective (Study in Donomulyo Malang)." *Journal of Humanity* 6 (2): 11544.
11. Kurniawanto, Hadi, and Yusniah Anggraini. 2019. "Empowering Women in the Development of Village-Owned Enterprises (Bumdes) through Utilizing the Potential of the Agricultural Sector (Case Study in Kadu Ela Village, Cadasari District, Pandeglang Regency)." *Journal of Regional Development Policy* 3 (2): 127–37. <https://doi.org/10.37950/jkpd.v3i2.71>.

12. Banten Provincial Government. 2017. Regional Regulation of Banten Province concerning the Regional *Medium-Term Development Plan of Banten Province for 2017-2022 of the Banten Provincial Government in 2017*.
13. Rahman, H U. 2021. "The Role of Energy Consumption, Economic Growth and Globalization in Environmental Degradation: Empirical Evidence from the Brics Region." *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 13 (4): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13041924>.
14. Ramdansyah, A.D, Zahara, V.M, Suci, S.C. 2020. "International Journal of Research in Commerce, It & Management." *International Journal of Research in Commerce and Management Studies* 2 (5). <http://ijrcm.org.in/>.
15. Rasheed, Abubakar, Gershom Endelani Mwalupaso, Qasir Abbas, Xu Tian, and Rafay Waseem. 2020. "Women Participation: A Productivity Strategy in Rice Production." *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 12 (7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12072870>.
16. Risyanti, Roesmidi. 2006. *Community Empowerment*. Sumedang: ALQAPRINT.
17. Rizkia, N, R. 2017. "THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN IMPROVING THE FAMILY ECONOMY THROUGH THE P2WKSS PROGRAM IN SUMBER GAMOL, BALECATUR, GAMPING, SLEMAN." *Progress in Physical Geography*.
18. Shardlow. 1998. *Values in Professional Practice*. Routledge.
19. Smith, Nicole M. 2015. "Gender and Livelihood Diversification: Maasai Women's Market Activities in Northern Tanzania." *Journal of Development Studies* 51 (3): 305–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2014.957278>.
20. Sulistyowati, Tutik. 2016. "Women's Empowerment Model in Improving Professionalism and Competitiveness to Face the Commercialization of the World of Work." *Journal of Women and Children* 1 (1): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.22219/jpa.v1i1.2748>.
21. Susanti, Emy, and Siti Mas'udah. 2017. "Women's Empowerment Model in Home-Based Industries in East Java Province, Indonesia." *Society, Culture and Politics* 30 (4): 353–66. <https://e-journal.unair.ac.id/MKP/article/view/4930/4346>.
22. Tindangen, Megi, Daisy S M Engka, Patri C Wauran, Department of Development Economics, and Faculty of Economics. 2020. "The Role of Women in Improving Family Economy (Case Study: Women Rice Workers in West Lemoh Village, East Tombariri District, Minahasa Regency)." *Journal of Scientific Periodicals Efficiency* 20 (03): 79–87.
23. Wahyu Nugraheni. 2012. "THE ROLE AND POTENTIAL OF WOMEN IN MEETING THE ECONOMIC NEEDS OF FISHING FAMILIES", 1 (2).
24. Zahara, Vadilla Mutia, Fauji Sanusi, and Stannia Holy Light. 2020. "DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS NETWORKS BASED ON LOCAL PRODUCTS IN CILEGON CITY." *Janayu* 1 (2): 168–77. <https://doi.org/10.22219/janayu.v1i2.12385>.