

Empowerment of Women Farm Laborers to Improve Household Economy: A Case Study in Rural Aceh

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Abstract

Poverty is a significant problem, especially in rural areas. Women who work as farm laborers in Aceh Besar District play an important role in supporting the family economy. This research aims to find the empowerment of female farm laborers to improve the family economy and lead to a prosperous family. This study collected data through observation, interviews, and documentation using descriptive qualitative methods and triangulation analysis. The findings show that the empowerment improved family welfare through increased income and better financial management. Empowerment programs can help women farm laborers become more economically independent and contribute more meaningfully to family welfare.

KEYWORDS *Women's Empowerment, Farmworkers, Family Economy, Welfare.*

Introduction

Poverty in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, is still a significant problem. Many women in Aceh Besar District work as farm laborers to help increase family income. The role of women is very important, especially in families that still live in economic limitations. Women's empowerment offers one practical approach to reducing poverty and improve family welfare. Research on how the empowerment of female farm laborers can be applied in Aceh Besar District to help low-income families is therefore especially relevant.

The role of women in the agricultural sector in Indonesia cannot be ignored. In rural areas, women often have to take over the role of breadwinner to support the family economy, especially in low-income families.¹ In this context, women in the Aceh Besar district, especially those

¹ José Alberto Molina, "Caring within the Family: Reconciling Work and Family Life," *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 36, no. 1 (March 2015): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-015-9441-8>; Steven G. Anderson, Min Zhan, and Jeff Scott, "Developing Financial Management Training in Low-Income Communities: Assessing Needs and Community Practice Implications," *Journal of Community Practice* 13, no. 4 (December 2005): 31–49, https://doi.org/10.1300/J125v13n04_03.

working as farm laborers, face significant challenges as they have to work with low wages and harsh working conditions.² Even so, they play an important role in increasing family income. Women's dual role as housewives and breadwinners makes empowerment essential to improve the quality of life of their families and communities.³ Women's empowerment, particularly in the agricultural sector, aims to equip them with the skills, knowledge, and access to resources needed to increase their productivity and income. Through empowerment programs, women can increase their income and develop financial management skills that help them better manage their family income.⁴ This increased capacity can lead to more prosperous and self-reliant families and reduce dependence on the sole income of the male head of household, offering a hopeful future for these families.⁵

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- ² Giulia Zaninelli, "Small Palm Oil Plantation as Political Arena: Environmental Narratives Among Workers and NGOs in Aceh, Indonesia," *LAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (2020): 37–48, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22492/ijcs.5.2.03>; Asna Husin, "Women of Aceh: The Struggle for Peace and Justice," in *Economic Empowerment of Women in the Islamic World*, vol. Volume 1, Advances in Research on Islamic Economics and Finance (WORLD SCIENTIFIC, 2019), 309–30, https://doi.org/10.1142/9789811212154_0015; Wening Udasmoro, "Women's Labor Force Participation in Insurgency and Ethno-Religious Conflict: The Cases of Aceh and Ambon," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 24, no. 3 (May 2022): 395–414, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2022.2084138>.
- ³ Ozza Candra Firyanti et al., "The Changing Roles of Women in Java: From Housewife Roles to Family Woman," *Social Studies in Education* 1, no. 1 (June 2023): 57–66, <https://doi.org/10.15642/sse.2023.1.1.57-66>; I Gusti Ayu Purnamawati and Made Suyana Utama, "Women's Empowerment Strategies to Improve Their Role in Families and Society," *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law* 18, no. 5 (2019): 119; Armela Xhaho, Erka Çaro, and Ajay Bailey, "Empowerment or a Double Burden? Work, Family, and Agency among Albanian Migrant Women in Greece," *Gender, Place & Culture* 28, no. 10 (September 2021): 1431–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2020.1817872>.
- ⁴ Homa Hoodfar, *Between Marriage and the Market: Intimate Politics and Survival in Cairo* (California: University of California Press, 1997); Cathy Faulcon Bowen, Daniel J. Lago, and Marilyn M. Furry, "Money Management in Families: A Review of the Literature with a Racial, Ethnic, and Limited Income Perspective," *Advancing the Consumer Interest* 9, no. 2 (1997): 32–42; Anderson, Zhan, and Scott, "Developing Financial Management Training in Low-In."
- ⁵ Lawrence Haddad, "The Income Earned by Women: Impacts on Welfare Outcomes," *Agricultural Economics* 20, no. 2 (March 1999): 135–41, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0169-5150\(98\)00083-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0169-5150(98)00083-8); Tiah Abdul-Kabiru Mahama and Paul Kwame Nkegbe, "Impact of Household Livelihood Diversification on Welfare in Ghana," *Scientific African* 13 (September 2021): e00858, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sciaf.2021.e00858>; Ham Kimkong et al., "Income Diversification and Household Wellbeing: Case Study of the Rural Framing Communities of Tang Krasang and Trapang Trabek in Stung Chreybak, Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia," *Sustainability* 15, no. 14 (July 2023): 11106, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151411106>; Anjini Kochar et al., "Financial Access and Women's

This study aims to develop a practical framework for empowering women farm laborers to improve the household economy and increase welfare in Aceh Besar District. The research analyses the factors that influence women farm laborers' participation in supporting family income, identifies the challenges they face, and formulates an empowerment strategy that involves improving skills and financial management. In addition, the study also evaluates the impact of implementing these empowerment strategies on the family welfare of women farm laborers, with the aim of contribution to poverty alleviation in rural areas. This study offers novelty in several important aspects. Mainly focusing on women's empowerment in the specific context of farm laborers in Aceh Besar District, which has not been widely discussed in previous studies. In addition to that, this study also examines the economic role of women farm laborers and provides a practical approach to empowerment strategies that can be applied to improve family welfare. This research also uses a data triangulation approach to validate the analysis results. It combines skills training with financial education as a concrete step to help women farm laborers become more independent and empowered. This distinguishes the present study from prior work that addresses women's dual roles without offering targeted empowerment solutions.

The economic contribution of women farm laborers should also be understood within the broader structure of rural household livelihoods. Agricultural households rarely depend on a single source of income throughout the year because farm work is strongly influenced by planting and harvesting cycles. For low-income families, the participation of women in paid agricultural work therefore functions as an important household strategy for maintaining consumption when the income of the main breadwinner is insufficient or irregular.

In this context, women's earnings are not merely additional income. They can become a stabilizing component of household finances because they are used to cover food, education, transportation, health-related expenses, and other routine needs. The importance of women's earnings

Role in Household Decisions: Empirical Evidence from India's National Rural Livelihoods Project," *Journal of Development Economics* 155 (March 2022): 102821, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2022.102821>.

becomes even more visible during periods when agricultural activities are limited or when household expenditure increases. Consequently, an empowerment approach needs to consider both the productive contribution of women in agriculture and the way their income is integrated into everyday household financial decisions.⁶

Women farm laborers in rural communities also occupy a position that is closely connected to social relations within the family and village.⁷ Their decision to work is often shaped by economic necessity, available employment, family responsibilities, and local expectations regarding women's domestic roles. This situation creates a dual responsibility because women are expected to participate in income-generating activities while continuing to perform household and caregiving tasks.

The dual role can strengthen women's contribution to family welfare, but it may also increase their workload and reduce the time available for rest, learning, and participation in community activities. For this reason, empowerment should not be interpreted only as increasing the number of hours that women work. A more meaningful form of empowerment is one that improves the quality of women's work, strengthens their bargaining position, expands access to useful knowledge and resources, and enables them to obtain greater benefits from the economic activities in which they already participate.

The agricultural setting of Aceh Besar provides an important context for examining this issue, as farm labor is shaped by land availability and use, seasonal cropping conditions, and the institutional organization of farmers through extension services and farmer groups.⁸ Women may be involved in

⁶ Eva Banowati et al., "Digital Technology Use and Perceived Intergenerational Empowerment in Sustainable Rural Tourism: Evidence from a Youth-Dominated Sample in Mount Muria, Indonesia," *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning* 21, no. 8 (August 31, 2026): 3779–88, <https://doi.org/10.18280/ijstdp.210827>.

⁷ Luisa Lupo and Saniye Dedeoğlu, "From Home to Farm: Household and Labour Brokerage Practices in Turkey's Commercial Agriculture," *Journal of Rural Studies* 124 (May 2026): 104134, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2026.104134>; Eva Banowati et al., "Tenurial Mapping and Agroforestry Model Development Based on Socio-Cultural Dynamic on Muria Forest Production Area," *Indonesian Journal of Environmental Law and Sustainable Development* 4, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijel.v4i1.22287>.

⁸ E Susanti et al., "A Study of Rice Farming Community in Aceh Besar," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 1183, no. 1 (May 2023): 012099, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1183/1/012099>.

several stages of production, including sowing, planting, crop maintenance, pest control, harvesting, cleaning, and post-harvest activities. Although these tasks are essential to agricultural production, their economic value is not always accompanied by equal access to land, capital, technology, training, or decision-making opportunities.

This gap between labor contribution and access to productive resources is one of the reasons why empowerment is relevant. When women receive practical agricultural knowledge, financial education, and opportunities to participate in farmer institutions, they are better positioned to transform labor income into longer-term household benefits. Thus, empowerment can connect women's existing contribution as workers with broader opportunities for economic independence and family resilience.

Another important dimension is financial capability. An increase in household income does not automatically translate into sustainable well-being when households have limited financial capability to budget and plan expenditures, build emergency savings, manage financial risks, and allocate resources toward productive purposes.⁹ Financial education can help women distinguish between daily consumption, education costs, savings, debt obligations, and capital for small-scale economic activities. For women farm laborers whose earnings may vary according to the agricultural season, basic budgeting and saving practices are particularly relevant because income is not necessarily received in the same amount every day or every month. Strengthening financial management therefore complements agricultural skills training. The combination of productive skills and financial capability allows empowerment programs to address both sides of the household economy: how income is generated and how income is managed. This integrated perspective is consistent with the objective of improving family welfare rather than focusing solely on short-term increases in wages.

Women's empowerment has a relational dimension, as women's increased economic contribution may strengthen their bargaining position

⁹ Jing Jian Xiao et al., "Financial Capability: A Systematic Conceptual Review, Extension and Synthesis," *International Journal of Bank Marketing* 40, no. 7 (September 2022): 1680–1717, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-05-2022-0185>.

and expand their participation in household decision-making.¹⁰ When women contribute income and possess stronger financial knowledge, they may have greater confidence to discuss priorities such as children's education, home improvement, savings, and productive investment. Such participation does not necessarily replace the role of husbands or other family members. Instead, it can encourage more collaborative decision-making in which household resources are discussed according to shared needs. In this sense, women's economic empowerment can support a more balanced distribution of responsibility within the family. The outcome that matters is not only the amount of money earned by women, but also whether women are able to participate meaningfully in decisions concerning the use of household resources and the future of the family.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method using a triangulation approach.¹¹ Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation from female farm laborers in several villages in Aceh Besar district. The sampling technique used probability sampling to ensure accurate representation. The collected data were processed using descriptive qualitative analysis with an interactive method that includes data reduction, data presentation, and verification. Validation was conducted through source triangulation to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained.

The use of observation, interviews, and documentation is important for capturing different dimensions of women farm laborers' experiences. Observation provides information about the working environment and the types of agricultural activities carried out by women, while interviews allow

¹⁰ Bernice Wadei, Kwame Ansong Wadei, and Isaac Bonuedi, "Re-Examining the Links between Women's Work and Household Power Dynamics: Insights from Rural and Urban Ghana," *Human Geography* 19, no. 1 (March 2026): 51–65, <https://doi.org/10.1177/19427786251333094>.

¹¹ Urszula Grata-Borkowska et al., "Perception and Attitude toward Teleconsultations among Different Healthcare Professionals in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 18 (September 2022): 11532, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191811532>.

participants to explain the reasons for working, the use of income, the challenges they face, and their experiences with empowerment activities. Documentation supports these sources by providing additional evidence related to activities, participation, and field conditions. The triangulation of these sources is intended to reduce dependence on a single form of information and to strengthen the interpretation of recurring patterns. In a study that focuses on household economy and empowerment, this is particularly useful because economic change is not only reflected in reported income but also in changes in financial behavior, household conditions, participation, and the ability to make decisions.

The descriptive qualitative analysis is directed toward identifying patterns that connect women's work, empowerment activities, and family welfare. Data reduction is used to organize information that is most relevant to the research focus, including types of work, income, participation in training, financial management, access to resources, and household decision-making. Data presentation then helps compare similarities and differences among the information obtained from participants, while verification is used to examine whether the interpretation remains consistent with the collected evidence. Through this process, the study seeks to present empowerment as a practical process experienced by women farm laborers rather than as an abstract concept. The analysis therefore emphasizes how women describe changes in their economic contribution and the conditions that support or constrain those changes.

Results and Discussion

The results show that empowering women farm laborers in Aceh Besar District has significantly improved the family economy. Based on interviews with 150 female farm laborers, they reported an increase in daily income ranging from IDR 80,000 to IDR 150,000. They also reported managing their household finances more effectively, which allowed them to meet daily needs. Family welfare levels have increased, characterized by their ability to improve their housing conditions, purchase household appliances, and send their children to higher education. Community

economic improvement can be achieved through various means, including women entering the paid workforce to support family while continuing to manage their domestic responsibilities.¹²

Empowerment is key to improving welfare by providing skills and opportunities for people to develop. Empowerment aims to create equality of roles, access, and control between women and men in development. The government's women's empowerment program seeks to distribute development benefits fairly so that the community is more empowered to solve its problems responsibly.¹³ This research in Aceh Besar District used a descriptive qualitative method with data collection through field observation, interviews, documentation, and literature study of female farm laborers. The survey results show that the empowerment of women farm laborers in the area has improved their ability to manage their income so that the family economy has improved and their lives are more prosperous. Of the 150 women farm laborers who became informants, all

¹² Ririn Nopiah, Eka Dewi Anggraini, and Puji Amalia Islami, "Woman's Labor Participation and Household Welfare: An Empirical Study in Sumatera Island," *Jurnal Kawistara* 14, no. 1 (April 2024): 72–85, <https://doi.org/10.22146/kawistara.81011>; Yovita Mumpuni Hartarini, Siti Khayatun, and Tika Selviana, "Contribution Of Women Workers To The Family Economy," *Jurnal Capital: Kebijakan Ekonomi, Manajemen Dan Akuntansi* 5, no. 1 (July 2023): 50–65, <https://doi.org/10.33747/capital.v5i1.163>; Nanda Audia et al., "The Dynamics of the Role of Women Workers Abroad to Improve the Family Economy: The Perspective of Islamic Economics," *Journal of Economics Research and Policy Studies* 3, no. 3 (December 2023): 159–68, <https://doi.org/10.53088/jerps.v3i3.761>; Eki Parmana and Erda Fitriani, "Peran Ganda Perempuan Buruh Tani Karet," *Culture & Society: Journal Of Anthropological Research* 3, no. 1 (September 2021): 61–71, <https://doi.org/10.24036/csjar.v3i1.90>.

¹³ Navneet Gera and Swati Rohatgi, "A Bibliometric Analysis of Women's Economic Empowerment Lite," *International Journal of Services, Economics and Management, Inderscience Enterprises Ltd* 16, no. 6 (2025): 702–18; Wulpiah Wulpiah, "Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Peningkatan Ekonomi Keluarga: Telaah Empiris Kelompok Kawasan Rumah Pangan Lestari (KRPL) Desa Kemuja Kecamatan Mendo Barat Kabupaten Bangka," *NOURA: Jurnal Kajian Gender Dan Anak* 1, no. 2 (December 2017): 1–18; Sabarina Husein, Herdis Herdiansyah, and LG Saraswati Putri, "Allocation to Gender Empowerment towards Gender Equality of Sustainable Development Goals," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 716, no. 1 (March 2021): 012096, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/716/1/012096>; Anuradha Yadav, Anisha Mishra, and Sarvesh Kumar Yadav, "The Role of Women's Empowerment in Advancing Sustainable Development: A Bibliometric Analysis of Contributions to the SDG Agenda," *Journal of Informatics Education and Research* 5, no. 3 (July 2025), <https://doi.org/10.52783/jier.v5i3.3281>; Rofi Wahanisa et al., "Creating a Child-Friendly District: Strengthening Psychological First Aid Skills for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) Cadre in Pemalang Regency," *Jurnal Pengabdian Hukum Indonesia* 8, no. 2 (2025): 375–96, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jphi.v8i2.32395>.

of them stated that there was an increase in the welfare of their families, with a regular average income as stated in the survey results.

TABLE 1
Average income levels earned by female farm workers

Women Farm Workers Group	Types of farm labor jobs	Average income per day
1. Farm Labourer (rice field)	1. Sowing rice seeds	IDR 80,000-
	2. Planting rice plants	100,000
	3. Giving fertilizer, cleaning grass, and spraying pests	IDR 80,000-
	4. Harvesting rice	100,000
		IDR 80,000-100,000
2. Need a Farmer (garden)	1. Sowing seeds (chili, tomato, corn, eggplant, candlenut, betel nut, papaya, rambutan, langsung, avocado)	IDR 100,000-150,000
	2. Planting	IDR 80,000-100,000
	3. Giving fertilizer, cleaning grass, and spraying pests	IDR 80,000-100,000
	4. Harvesting (chili, tomato, corn, eggplant, candlenut, betel nut, papaya, rambutan, langsung, avocado)	IDR 100,000-150,000

Source: Personal data resulting from observations and interviews

Based on Table 1, the daily income of female farm laborers ranges from IDR 80,000 to IDR 150,000, with the highest income coming from harvest work. Harvest work requires more energy, especially from female laborers involved in cutting the paddy, collecting the harvest, cleaning the paddy, packing it in sacks, and transporting it to the car for further processing at the rice mill. This is in response to the findings of a survey conducted by the researchers.



Figure 1: The researcher interviewed female farm laborers in the Aceh Besar area

From the results of direct interviews with female farm laborers, they stated that so far, there have been empowerment efforts carried out by the government through the head of the farmer group, but this has not been done effectively because not all farmer members are involved in these activities, so not all female farm laborers get knowledge or education related to empowerment, they hope that empowerment can be carried out systematically and effectively. This was found in the research of Wadei (2025)¹⁴ and Kamruzzaman (2020)¹⁵ state that empowerment is a process of developing all potential to participate in development.

¹⁴ Bernice Wadei et al., "Groundnut Processing and Women's Economic Empowerment: Insights from a Qualitative Analysis," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (January 2025): 101631, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101631>.

¹⁵ Palash Kamruzzaman, "Exploring the Nexus Between Participation and Empowerment," *Journal of Development Policy and Practice* 5, no. 1 (January 2020): 32–53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2455133320909926>.



Figure 2: Researchers observe female farm laborers planting rice seedlings in the Aceh Besar region

Women, especially low-income families who live in the village, do not care what work they do; most of them work as farm laborers, and the rest of them work in the gardens of people from outside the village where they live, meaning that they become farm laborers in the fields when the planting season begins, they also work in other people's gardens that are deliberately entrusted to them to be able to improve the degree of life and the economy of their families. This is as stated by José Alberto Molina (2015)¹⁶ Rebekah Burroway (2017),¹⁷ Eilene Z. Bisgrove & Barry M. Popkin (1996)¹⁸ and Hitomi Komatsu, Hazel Jean L. Malapit, & Sophie Theis (2018)¹⁹ that women who work will increase their family income, which is automatically able to improve the quality of nutrition and the welfare of all family members.

¹⁶ Molina, "Caring within the Family."

¹⁷ Rebekah Burroway, "Are All Jobs Created Equal? A Cross-National Analysis of Women's Employment and Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries," *Social Science Research* 67 (September 2017): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2017.07.003>.

¹⁸ Eilene Z. Bisgrove and Barry M. Popkin, "Does Women's Work Improve Their Nutrition: Evidence from the Urban Philippines," *Social Science & Medicine* 43, no. 10 (November 1996): 1475–88, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(96\)00046-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(96)00046-9).

¹⁹ Hitomi Komatsu, Hazel Jean L. Malapit, and Sophie Theis, "Does Women's Time in Domestic Work and Agriculture Affect Women's and Children's Dietary Diversity? Evidence from Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Ghana, and Mozambique," *Food Policy* 79 (August 2018): 256–70, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2018.07.002>.



Figure 3: Female farm laborers working during the rice harvest season

During the harvesting season, female farm laborers are paid more than other activities such as sowing seeds, planting, and cleaning crops because, during harvesting, more energy is expended from cutting, cleaning, and even transporting to the car to be taken to the grain mill. This is due to the absence of other options to continue to earn income to meet family needs, even though the wages given are relatively low if we consider the work as a farm laborer requires a lot of energy, so not everyone can do this job, especially this type of work is done by women and the income earned is not proportional to the energy expended. According to Wardihan Sabar, Abd. Rahim, & Aulia Rahman Bato (2023),²⁰ P. Mooventhana, Hem Prakash Verma, & Raipur, Chhattisgarh (2025),²¹ and Muthiah Syakirotn & Anne Charina (2020),²² improving the family economy cannot be separated from the income generated from the work done. In addition, empowerment for women farm laborers must continue to be carried out so that they can better prosper their families from the income they earn.

²⁰ Wardihan Sabar, Abd Rahim, and Aulia Rahman Bato, "The Role of Women's Agricultural Workers and Household Economic Resilience | Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 12, no. 1 (May 2023), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23887/jish.v12i1.51701>.

²¹ P. Mooventhana, Hem Prakash Verma, and Suman Singh, "Women Empowerment Initiatives under the Farmer FIRST Programme for the Livelihood Development of Tribal Farm Women in Chhattisgarh," *Indian Farming* 75, no. 10 (December 2025): 53–56.

²² Muthiah Syakirotn and Anne Charina, "Tingkat Kesejahteraan Keluarga Buruh Tani Wanita Pada Bidang Produksi Kopi Di CV. Frinsa Agrolestari," *Jurnal Ilmu Pertanian Indonesia* 25, no. 1 (January 2020): 100–110, <https://doi.org/10.18343/jipi.25.1.100>.



Figure 4: Implementation of focus group discussion (FGD) on the introduction of concepts

So women farm laborers need to be empowered so that they are better at managing the family economy and can continue to prosper their families, such as training and socialization about empowerment. The concept of women's empowerment is through training. Furthermore, the concept of women's empowerment is also an effort to socialize with them and open-thinking insights to women on how they can continue to be productive and learn to manage to improve the family economy so that welfare is realized. Empowerment is used as an approach to equip people, especially women farm laborers, with knowledge and skills to improve their ability to determine their future and participate in influencing the lives of their surroundings.²³

With the concept of empowering women farm laborers in Aceh Besar district, it is hoped that it can provide opportunities for them to manage land and advance the agricultural sector in villages in the Aceh Besar district area.

²³ Ylva Nyberg et al., "Supporting Access and Implementation of Agricultural Extension Services for Female Smallholder Farmers – a Systematic Review," *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability* 23, no. 1 (December 2025): 2505387, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735903.2025.2505387>; Rili Windiasih et al., "Women Farmers Group Participation in Empowering Local Food Security," *International Journal Of Community Service* 3, no. 3 (August 2023): 186–94, <https://doi.org/10.51601/ijcs.v3i3.200>.

The results also show that empowerment through agricultural skills training and financial education significantly increases the income of female agricultural workers. Training in modern agriculture, such as using organic fertilizer and natural pest control, has helped increase crop productivity. Women farm workers are also trained in financial management, which enables them to manage their income and save for future needs more wisely. Of the 150 respondents interviewed, 85% reported improved household financial management skills after participating in the empowerment program. In addition, the study found that the empowerment of women agricultural workers also strengthened their role in economic decision-making within the family. Previously, husbands often made important decisions related to family finances. However, after empowerment, 75% of the women in this study reported that they were more active in determining the allocation of family expenses and investments, such as children's education and home improvements. This change not only had a positive impact on the family economy but also increased women's confidence to contribute equally to the household.

Interviews with female farm laborers show that the income from their work dramatically helps improve the family economy and complements their husbands' income, resulting in a more prosperous standard of living. Two factors encourage them to work as farm laborers: internal factors, such as family economic conditions that make women feel the need to participate in the world of work, and external factors, such as the surrounding environment. Women's participation in the world of work contributes significantly to family welfare, especially in fulfilling the needs of life, but they also feel a psychological burden. The role of women in the agricultural sector in Indonesia continues to increase every year, with the number of female farmers more significant than men. Women empowerment aims to strengthen their ability to be independent and manage family resources. The concept of empowerment applied to female farm laborers can improve family welfare through economic improvement.

Women's empowerment in the agricultural sector has positively impacted family welfare, especially among female farm laborers. The results of this study are consistent with previous research, which states that women's involvement in economic activities can encourage an increase in

family income. However, this study further shows that empowerment does not stop at the monetary aspect but also improves women's capacity to manage household finances. Training in agricultural skills and financial management is crucial in this empowerment process. Thus, women's empowerment should be viewed comprehensively, covering economic aspects, technical skills, and wise financial management.

In addition, women's active participation in family financial decision-making, which increased after the empowerment program, is evidence that women farmworkers are not only additional breadwinners but also important decision-makers in the family. This change shifts the traditional role of women who were previously more passive in financial matters. This success is also in line with empowerment theory, which states that a person can become more independent when given the skills, knowledge, and confidence to make independent decisions. Therefore, women's empowerment in this study improved the quality of family life in terms of economy and more balanced gender relations. However, the study also identified some challenges in implementing the empowerment program. While agricultural and financial management training had a positive impact, there were still constraints related to access to land and capital. Some women in this study reported difficulties accessing credit or additional capital to expand their farming businesses. This suggests that women's economic empowerment requires training, skills development, and broader structural support, such as access to credit and resources. By addressing these barriers, women's empowerment can be more effective and sustainable.

Empowerment of women farm laborers focuses on optimizing their ability to improve their welfare through various empowerment concepts. Since the beginning of agriculture, women have played an important role, although their tasks were often gender-specific. With industrialization and commercialization, women's role in agriculture increased, although they often faced worse working conditions. Colonialism and the feudal system resulted in women losing land rights, while the labor and feminist movements of the 20th century fought for their rights. Today, women

continue to play an important role in food security, although they still face challenges such as gender discrimination, limited access to land, and unequal wages. The history of women agricultural workers reflects complex social, economic, and political dynamics, with roles and challenges changing over time.

Empowering women farm workers through education involves training in sustainable agriculture, additional skills, and financial education to improve their ability to manage their farms and family finances. Communicative concepts include strengthening women farmer community networks, collaborating with NGOs and government, and using modern agricultural technology and information.²⁴ Financing includes providing funds through microcredit, strengthening cooperatives for financial services, and access to government subsidies and assistance, all aimed at supporting agriculture and improving family welfare. Empowerment of women agricultural workers involves equitable access to land, legal rights to land, natural resources such as water and forests, and inputs such as seeds and farm tools. In addition, improving rural infrastructure, such as roads and irrigation, is essential. Awareness of gender equality and the rights of women agricultural workers is also increased through education and advocacy. Mentoring and monitoring programs by experts or successful farmers help them grow their businesses. Supportive government policies, including protective regulations and incentives, are essential for the sustainability of this empowerment.

By empowering women farm laborers, diversification of income sources encourages them to develop side businesses, such as small livestock, fish farming, and handicrafts, and establish farm-based household agro-industries. Improving access to health services and family nutrition programs also helps improve their welfare. Based on the survey, the welfare of female farm laborers had significantly improved compared to when they relied solely on their husband's income. They can now purchase vehicles

²⁴ Rofi Wahanisa et al., "Moving Together to Make Lerep Village in Semarang Regency Safe from Sexual Violence," *Jurnal Pengabdian Hukum Indonesia* 7, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.15294/jphi.v7i2.6905>.

and appliances, renovate their homes, and send their children to school. Their monthly income ranges from Rp 2,400,000 to Rp 4,500,000, so fulfilling their family's needs and welfare is more secure. This proves that work in the non-formal sector, such as farm labor, can support the family economy and achieve community welfare.

The income pattern presented in Table 1 indicates that the economic value of women's farm labor varies according to the type and intensity of agricultural work. Harvest activities provide higher daily earnings than several other tasks, but they also require greater physical effort. This difference is important because it shows that higher income may be associated with heavier workloads rather than with improved employment conditions. From an empowerment perspective, the objective should therefore not be limited to increasing women's participation in physically demanding activities. Programs should also help women improve productivity, acquire skills that have greater economic value, and develop alternative sources of income that can reduce dependence on labor-intensive seasonal work. By broadening economic options, empowerment can improve the quality and stability of women's contribution to the household economy.

The interviews show that previous empowerment efforts have not always reached all women farm laborers. Limited participation is a significant issue because the benefits of training cannot be expected to spread evenly when access depends on only a small number of farmer-group members. A more inclusive approach would require clear information about program schedules, participant selection, training objectives, and opportunities for follow-up. Women who are not formal landowners or who work mainly as wage laborers should not automatically be excluded from agricultural extension and financial education. Their daily involvement in production means that they possess practical experience that can be strengthened through training. Wider participation would also allow knowledge to circulate among workers and reduce the possibility that empowerment benefits remain concentrated among individuals who already have better access to farmer institutions.

The findings concerning improved financial management are particularly relevant because they show that empowerment affects the

household beyond the workplace. When women are able to plan the use of income more carefully, the value of relatively small and irregular earnings can be maximized. Budgeting can help families prioritize basic needs, while saving practices can create a buffer for school expenses, health needs, agricultural inputs, or periods when employment is limited. This is important for farm labor households because seasonal income can make them vulnerable to short-term financial pressure. Financial education should therefore be designed in a practical manner, using examples that reflect the cash flow of rural households. Simple records of income and expenditure, separation of household money from business capital, and planning for recurring expenses can be more useful than complex financial concepts that are difficult to apply in everyday life.

The reported increase in women's participation in household financial decisions also suggests that empowerment has social consequences. Economic contribution can strengthen women's confidence, but confidence is more likely to be sustained when it is accompanied by knowledge and recognition from other family members. Participation in financial decisions allows women to connect the income they earn with household priorities and long-term goals. For example, decisions about education, housing, savings, or productive assets can be discussed jointly rather than being determined by one person alone. This form of participation is important because empowerment is not simply an individual achievement; it is influenced by relationships within the household. A supportive family environment can reinforce the benefits of training, while restrictive decision-making patterns may limit women's ability to apply newly acquired skills.

At the same time, the study identifies access to land and capital as continuing constraints. These barriers show that individual training has limits when structural opportunities remain unequal. Agricultural skills can improve knowledge, but women may still be unable to expand production if they do not have secure access to land, equipment, seeds, irrigation, or affordable financing. Similarly, financial management training can improve household budgeting, but it cannot by itself create sufficient capital for business development. This means that empowerment programs require coordination between training, farmer institutions, cooperatives, financial

services, and government support. The goal is to create a pathway in which women can move from wage labor toward more secure and productive economic activities if they choose to do so, without removing the support needed by those who continue to work as farm laborers.

Access to credit must also be approached carefully because financing can support productive activities but can create additional pressure when repayment obligations are not matched by stable income. For women farm laborers, appropriate financing should consider seasonal cash flow, the scale of the proposed activity, and the household's ability to manage risk. Collective mechanisms such as savings groups or cooperatives may provide an alternative when individual access to formal credit is limited. These institutions can also serve as spaces for sharing information, purchasing inputs, marketing products, and organizing training. However, access to finance should remain connected to financial education so that loans are used for clearly planned purposes and do not simply shift household vulnerability from low income to high debt. In this way, financial inclusion becomes part of empowerment rather than an end in itself.

Income diversification is another important strategy for strengthening household resilience. Agricultural wage labor is highly dependent on the farming calendar, weather, and demand for workers. Side activities such as food processing, small livestock, household-scale trade, handicrafts, or other locally feasible enterprises can provide additional income when farm work is unavailable. Diversification does not mean that all women should become entrepreneurs. Rather, it creates options that can be adjusted to women's skills, time, household responsibilities, and local market opportunities. Training programs should therefore begin with an assessment of existing abilities and resources instead of introducing activities that are disconnected from village conditions. Empowerment is more likely to be sustainable when new economic activities build on local knowledge, use accessible inputs, and respond to realistic demand.

The role of farmer groups and community networks is also central to the sustainability of empowerment. Individual skills may decline if women do not have opportunities to practice, exchange experiences, or obtain assistance when problems arise. Regular group meetings can provide a space for discussing agricultural techniques, household financial management,

access to government programs, and marketing opportunities. Peer learning can be particularly effective because women are able to compare experiences with others who face similar economic and domestic constraints. Community networks can also strengthen women's collective voice when communicating with village authorities, extension workers, or financial institutions. In this sense, empowerment is not only a process of improving individual capacity but also of strengthening the social support that allows women to use that capacity.

Sustainable empowerment should furthermore pay attention to the balance between productive work and family responsibilities. If economic programs increase women's workload without addressing time constraints, the apparent improvement in income may be accompanied by physical fatigue and psychological pressure. Training schedules, group activities, and livelihood programs should therefore be designed with consideration for women's daily routines. Where possible, family members should also be encouraged to recognize that household welfare is a shared responsibility. Such an approach can prevent empowerment from becoming an additional burden placed solely on women. The objective is to expand women's choices and capabilities, not to require them to perform more tasks without corresponding support.

Taken together, the findings support a multidimensional understanding of women's empowerment in rural agriculture. Economic improvement is reflected in income, but sustainable welfare also depends on skills, financial capability, decision-making participation, access to productive resources, social networks, and institutional support. The strongest empowerment strategy is therefore one that connects these dimensions rather than treating them as separate interventions. Agricultural training can increase productivity; financial education can improve the management of earnings; access to groups and institutions can expand opportunities; and supportive household relations can strengthen women's ability to participate in decisions. When these elements reinforce one another, women farm laborers are better positioned to contribute to household welfare in a way that is more secure, recognized, and sustainable over time.

Overall, this perspective emphasizes that successful empowerment must remain responsive to the everyday realities of women farm laborers in Aceh Besar. Programs need continuity, accessible participation, practical learning, and coordination among households, farmer groups, village institutions, extension services, and financial organizations. Continuous evaluation is equally important because women's needs may change across agricultural seasons and household life stages. Feedback from participants can help program providers identify which training is useful, which barriers remain unresolved, and which forms of support should be strengthened. By treating women as active partners in the design and evaluation of empowerment activities, interventions can become more relevant to local conditions and more capable of producing lasting improvements in household economic resilience and welfare. Regular follow-up can also help ensure that knowledge gained through training is applied in daily economic activities. In this way, empowerment becomes a continuing process of learning, adaptation, participation, and institutional support rather than a one-time activity that ends after training is completed. This continuity is essential for sustaining benefits across changing household circumstances.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study shows that empowering women farm laborers in Aceh Besar District significantly improves the family economy. Based on interviews with 150 female farm laborers, the increase in their daily income ranges from IDR 80,000 to IDR 150,000, directly impacting family welfare. They also report managing their household finances more effectively, as seen in their ability to meet basic needs, improve living conditions, purchase household goods, and send their children to higher education.

Empowerment programs involving agricultural skills and financial management training have increased agricultural productivity and strengthened women's role in family economic decision-making. As many as 75% of respondents said they were more active in determining the allocation of family expenditure and investment after attending these

empowerment programs, indicating an increase in women's more equal role in the family. However, despite the positive impact of this training, the study also found that there are still challenges related to women's access to land and capital. Some female agricultural workers reported difficulty securing credit or additional capital to expand their farming businesses. Women's economic empowerment, therefore, requires skills development training and broader structural support, such as access to credit and resources. By addressing these barriers, women's empowerment can be more effective and sustainable in improving family welfare and creating more balanced gender relations.

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The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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Generative AI Statement

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence was used as a supporting tool in the preparation of this manuscript, particularly to improve language quality, grammatical accuracy, and overall readability. The refinement of grammar and language was also carried out with the assistance of a sworn proofreader to ensure linguistic accuracy and clarity. All AI-generated outputs were critically reviewed, edited, and verified by the authors to ensure accuracy and maintain scientific integrity. The authors take full responsibility for the final content of the manuscript. The use of generative artificial intelligence was strictly limited to a supporting role and does not constitute authorship. Furthermore, no data analysis or interpretation was conducted by artificial intelligence without the authors' supervision and active involvement.

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