

# Empowering E-Warong Owners: Nurturing Self-Reliance through Economic Empowerment

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**ABSTRACT :** Poverty remains a significant issue in Indonesia, characterized by material scarcity, low incomes, legal injustices, susceptibility to crime, health challenges, limited education, and lack of influence. The Indonesian government is committed to addressing poverty through various economic empowerment initiatives, such as providing business capital, promoting productive businesses, and fostering social participation. This article focuses on the economic empowerment of families participating in the Sembako program, specifically those operating e-warongs in Kamal Village, Kalideres District. The study adopts a qualitative approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the economic empowerment situation. The findings reveal that e-warongs empower their owners by increasing individual capacity, protecting their rights, encouraging collective responsibility, and promoting sustainable thinking and action. E-warongs create entrepreneurial opportunities, facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration, bridge the divide, and contribute to economic independence. The initiative prioritizes the protection of rights and provides a safety net for vulnerable individuals. E-Warongs take three steps for economic empowerment: enabling, empowering, and protecting e-warong owners. The study examines self-reliance through three indicators: personal self-capacity, collective responsibility, and thinking and acting sustainably.

**KEYWORDS** – E-Warong, Economic Empowerment, Power, Self-Reliance

## I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains a significant issue in Indonesia and other developing countries, characterized by material deprivation, low income, legal injustice, vulnerability to crime, health issues, limited education, and lack of authority [1]. In Indonesia, both urban and rural areas have seen an increase in poverty rates, with 26.36 million people living in poverty as of March 2022. The poverty line was set at IDR 535,547.00 per capita per month, with food accounting for 74.15 percent and non-food at 25.85 percent [2].

The rise in poverty can be attributed to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy. Poverty is influenced by factors such as income, health, education, location, access to goods and services, and gender. The Indonesian government has implemented various initiatives through the Ministry of Social Affairs to address social welfare and food assistance programs. These programs include the Family Hope Program (PKH), Social Workers' Sakti Program, Business Groups (KUBE), and the Basic Food Program (Sembako Program). The Basic Food Program aims to provide non-cash assistance to beneficiary families, improve food security, increase coverage, and promote sustainable development goals. The government has transitioned to a non-cash scheme for the Food Social Assistance Program, distributed through electronic cards [3].

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government implemented the Social Safety Net Program, including the Sembako Program, to support affected individuals and small businesses. The aid index was raised, and the number of beneficiaries increased. The Staple Food Program within the Sembako Program prioritizes registered families in integrated social welfare data, providing food support and economic empowerment opportunities to improve nutrition and prevent stunting [3].

The Indonesian government is committed to economic empowerment as a means of reducing poverty. Efforts include providing business capital, promoting productive enterprises, establishing social markets and cooperatives, empowering young families, and encouraging social participation. However, there are poverty

gaps in certain areas, such as West Jakarta's Kamal Village, where different types of work, household sizes, and dependents contribute to disparities. The limited number of e-Warongs, which distribute essential goods to beneficiaries, highlights the need for more support. Strategies and programs for economic empowerment should be tailored based on data and involve collaboration among local stakeholders.

The previous research has primarily focused on discussing various aspects of economic empowerment, such as strategies, methods, community roles, and approaches related to religion or the environment [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9]. However, there hasn't been specific research found that explores the perspective of economic empowerment leading to the independence of the poor. Previous studies have generally focused on countermeasures aimed at increasing income and improving the overall economy.

Additionally, there have been some studies discussing the implementation of basic food programs and their effectiveness [10] [11] [12] [13] [14], but the research seems to be limited to those areas and doesn't delve into the broader concept of economic empowerment leading to independence for the poor. It appears that there is a research gap in exploring how economic empowerment can specifically contribute to the independence of individuals living in poverty. This could involve investigating factors such as access to education, skill development, entrepreneurial opportunities, and social support systems that can enable individuals to break free from the cycle of poverty. Conducting research in this area could provide valuable insights into the mechanisms and interventions that can foster sustainable economic empowerment and uplift disadvantaged communities.

## **II. RESEARCH METHOD**

The objective of this research was to analyze the economic empowerment of families participating in the basic food program which engaged in e-warongs (cooperation stalls) in Kamal Village, Kalideres District. The study employed a qualitative approach, which focuses on understanding social problems and phenomena, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the economic empowerment situation.

Qualitative methods involve techniques for collecting and analyzing data that go beyond strict academic procedures and quantification. The emphasis is on obtaining in-depth information and exploring the meaning of the subject. In this research, qualitative methods were used to conduct in-depth investigations, verbal discussions, and detailed reporting based on natural situations [15].

The aim was to explore and analyze the economic empowerment of beneficiary families involved in e-warongs through their participation in the basic food program. The research adopted a descriptive research approach, aiming to provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the subject matter. Descriptive research seeks to answer questions about who, when, where, and how, using words or numbers to "paint a picture" of the research topic [15].

The purpose of descriptive research is to present a systematic and accurate depiction of the social environment and conditions related to the research problem. It involves gathering data from various sources, including interviews, field notes, photographs, field observations, and secondary data such as official documents. The research report aims to provide valuable insights into the research problem by presenting a realistic representation of what occurred in the field and its relevance to the research objectives.

## **III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Economic Empowerment**

#### **Description of "Enabling" in the Implementation of E-Warong**

"Enabling" refers to creating a supportive environment that allows individuals and communities to thrive by recognizing their potential. Empowerment is the process of enhancing this potential through motivation and development [16]. In the context of E-Warong, "enabling" means providing resources, infrastructure, and support systems for successful electronic commerce activities. This includes training, financial assistance, technology access, networking, and addressing barriers. The goal is to empower individuals and communities to utilize E-Warongs for economic empowerment and livelihood improvement.

#### **Description of "Empowering" in the Implementation of E-Warong**

"Empowering" refers to the process of enhancing the potential and capacity of a community by providing resources, opportunities, and support. It enables communities to take control of their development and make informed decisions [16]. In the context of E-Warong, empowering involves providing support, resources,

and opportunities to strengthen the community involved. This can include training, access to finance, networking, and active participation in decision-making. Empowering the community in E-Warong enables them to effectively manage their stalls, improve business skills, and increase income. This leads to greater self-reliance, economic growth, and improved livelihoods for individuals involved.

Furthermore, there are seven types of power in community-based empowerment strategies. It emphasizes the interconnectedness and complex interactions among these powers. Additionally, it suggests the possibility of incorporating more power categories into the discussion. The focus is on recognizing the complex and dynamic nature of power in community-based empowerment, which presents opportunities for further exploration and development of the concept [17].

**Table 3.1**

<b>The powers involved in community-based empowerment strategies</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
Power to make personal choices and determine life chances	This power includes the freedom to make decisions related to their business operations, such as setting prices, choosing suppliers, and deciding on the range of products offered. It also encompasses the ability to shape their own future and pursue opportunities for growth and success within the e-warong sector. This power allows individuals to have a sense of agency and control over their economic activities, contributing to their empowerment and overall well-being.
Power to define need	This power refers to customers' ability to determine the types, quantities, and specific qualities of products they require. It emphasizes respecting diverse consumer preferences and ensuring e-warong outlets cater to a wide range of needs. Empowering individuals in e-warong involves promoting customer satisfaction, enhancing consumer agency, and fostering a sense of ownership and community participation. E-warong outlets can facilitate this by actively seeking and valuing customer feedback, offering a variety of products, and adopting an inclusive and customer-centered approach in their operations.
Power to think	In the implementation of e-warong, the power to think refers to encouraging individuals to engage in critical thinking and independent decision-making. It values individual perspectives and contributions, allowing for exploration of new ideas and approaches. By fostering an environment that promotes critical thinking, participants can enhance the functioning and effectiveness of e-warong. Empowering individuals includes providing access to information and resources and encouraging open dialogue and collaboration. This emphasis on thinking promotes individual autonomy and active involvement in shaping the success of e-warong.
Power to address institutions	In the implementation of e-warong, the power to address institutions refers to individuals' ability to engage with and influence social institutions that impact their operations. This includes government agencies, regulatory bodies, financial institutions, market associations, and local communities. Participants have the capacity to navigate bureaucratic processes, advocate for their needs, and seek support. They can engage in dialogue, contribute to policy development, and participate in decision-making. Holding institutions accountable and ensuring responsiveness is also important. Empowering e-warong participants to address institutions allows them to shape the regulatory environment, access resources, and overcome barriers. It gives them a voice in decision-making and fosters a supportive ecosystem for e-warong success.
Power to access and utilize resources	In the implementation of e-warong, individuals' power to access and utilize resources is crucial for their personal growth and well-being. However, many individuals face limited access to resources, creating inequalities and barriers. Empowerment strategies aim to address these

	issues by enhancing individuals' power to access and utilize resources effectively. This involves providing tools, support, and opportunities for financial resources, education, training, personal growth, and recreational/cultural experiences. Empowerment strategies seek to reduce barriers and promote equality, creating a more inclusive and equitable environment within the e-warong initiative.
Power to engage with the economy	In the context of e-warong, empowering individuals to engage with the economy involves promoting their participation and benefit from economic activities. It acknowledges the uneven distribution of economic power and aims to address this imbalance. E-warong initiatives strive to provide equal opportunities for participation and access to economic activities, promoting entrepreneurship, improving market access and financial resources, promoting fair trade practices, and fostering economic inclusivity. The goal is to create a more equitable distribution of economic power within the e-warong context.
Power to control reproduction	Empowering individuals in e-warong involves providing access to reproductive health services, education, and resources for informed decision-making in areas like family planning and parenting. It also entails addressing societal inequalities and biases that affect reproductive choices. E-warong initiatives prioritize empowering individuals to make autonomous decisions, challenge traditional norms, and foster a fairer and more inclusive environment. By addressing power imbalances related to reproduction, e-warong aims to transform the social, economic, and political order, allowing individuals to have control over their reproductive choices and contribute to a better society.

### **Description of “Protecting” in the Implementation of E-Warong**

Protecting and defending the rights of individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, is an important aspect of creating a just and equitable society. The concept of creating a safety net for those who are the target of development is aimed at ensuring that the empowerment process does not further marginalize or harm already disadvantaged groups [16].

In the implementation of e-warong, protecting rights refers to the establishment of a safety net for individuals who may be vulnerable or targeted during the development process. It recognizes the need to prevent further disempowerment of already marginalized or disadvantaged groups. During the empowerment process, it is crucial to safeguard the rights of the weak to ensure they are not further marginalized in the presence of stronger entities. Protection involves creating measures to mitigate unfair competition and cruel exploitation of the poor.

Within the e-warong context, protecting rights entails implementing mechanisms that provide support and assistance to vulnerable individuals. This may include policies and regulations to ensure fair competition, access to legal resources, social welfare programs, and initiatives that address systemic inequalities. By actively protecting the rights of marginalized groups, e-warong initiatives aim to create a more inclusive and just environment. This approach prevents further disempowerment and promotes the overall well-being and dignity of all participants, ensuring that the development process benefits everyone fairly.

### **3.2. Self-Reliance Indicators**

#### **Description of the Role of E-Warong in Relation to Personal Self Capacity**

Personal self-capacity refers to the ability of individuals within a community to meet their needs and overcome challenges using their own abilities. It involves having an independent mindset, necessary skills, and resources to address individual and collective problems. Economic self-capacity is a crucial aspect of self-reliance, where communities possess the economic capability to produce goods, services, and income to sustain their daily needs. This economic independence reduces reliance on external resources and contributes to overall community well-being [18].

Additionally, self-reliance encompasses the ability to exert control and influence in society. It means that individuals and communities actively participate in decision-making processes that impact their lives. They have a voice in shaping their communities' development and can influence policies and initiatives to align with

their needs and aspirations. By nurturing self-capacity and fostering self-reliance, individuals and communities become more resilient, self-sufficient, and empowered to address challenges and pursue their goals [18].

E-Warong enhances personal self-capacity by enabling individuals to establish and manage online stores, expanding their economic opportunities and independence. It fosters knowledge sharing and skill development through online platforms, providing training programs and resources to adapt to the digital marketplace. E-Warong facilitates collaboration and networking, empowering individuals through collective knowledge and resource sharing. Additionally, it promotes digital inclusion, allowing marginalized communities to participate in the digital economy and overcome barriers. Overall, e-warong empowers individuals to take control of their economic prospects, develop skills, and address challenges, leading to personal and economic independence.

#### **Description of the Role of E-warong in Relation to Collective Responsibility**

Collective responsibility is essential for self-reliance as it involves collaboration, support, and strong social networks among community members. By pooling resources, knowledge, and efforts, communities can address complex challenges and achieve common goals. This collaborative approach fosters shared responsibility and benefits, enhancing the resilience and well-being of the community. Community self-reliance recognizes the diverse strengths and resources within the community, leveraging interdependence to enhance collective capacity for sustainability. Strong social networks facilitate resource and knowledge exchange, promoting a sense of belonging and mutual assistance. By nurturing these connections, communities can access diverse resources, build trust, and ensure long-term sustainability. Overall, collective responsibility plays a vital role in self-reliance by promoting cooperation, partnerships, and social networks, enabling communities to overcome challenges, meet their needs, and achieve sustainability [18].

E-warong facilitates collaboration, partnerships, and the development of strong social networks within a community. It encourages community members to work together, share resources, and support one another in achieving common goals. E-warong platforms also enable partnerships between sellers, suppliers, and customers, fostering collective responsibility and supporting local businesses. Additionally, e-warong serves as a space for community members to engage in discussions and social interactions, promoting the development of strong social networks. Overall, e-warong plays a vital role in fostering collective responsibility and promoting a collaborative approach to community development and well-being.

#### **Description of the Role of E-Warong in Relation to Sustainability**

Community self-reliance within the framework of sustainable development requires the ability to think and act sustainably. This involves adopting practices that preserve the environment and ensure the sustainable management of resources. Communities prioritize maintaining environmental quality by preserving natural resources and minimizing negative impacts. They also take responsibility for public services and the long-term sustainability of resources [18].

Individuals in self-reliant communities are environmentally conscious and make sustainable choices. They promote resource conservation, renewable energy adoption, waste reduction, and eco-friendly practices. By integrating sustainability into resource management, communities ensure ecosystem viability and reduce their ecological footprint. Thinking and acting sustainably is essential for community self-reliance. It involves community members' awareness of environmental consequences and active efforts toward sustainable resource management. Prioritizing sustainability allows communities to preserve the environment, secure vital resources, and create a sustainable future [18].

E-warong platforms play a significant role in promoting sustainable thinking and actions within communities. They provide information, resources, and guidance on sustainable practices, enabling individuals to make informed decisions. By showcasing environmentally friendly products and services, e-warong platforms encourage consumers to prioritize sustainability, driving businesses to adopt more sustainable practices. E-warong also supports the integration of sustainable supply chains, promoting transparency and ethical production methods. Additionally, e-warong facilitates communication and knowledge-sharing among community members, fostering collective learning and collaboration for sustainable development. Overall, e-warong empowers individuals and businesses to make environmentally conscious choices, contributing to community sustainability and well-being.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

E-warong platforms have a significant impact on community empowerment. They enhance personal self-capacity, protect rights, promote collective responsibility, and foster sustainable thinking and action. E-warong initiatives create opportunities for entrepreneurship, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, bridging the digital divide and enabling economic independence. These initiatives prioritize the protection of rights and the creation of a safety net for vulnerable individuals. They also encourage cooperation and the development of strong social networks within communities. E-warong platforms play a vital role in promoting sustainable practices, driving the adoption of environmentally conscious choices, and contributing to a more sustainable future. Overall, e-warong initiatives empower individuals and communities to address challenges, enhance their self-capacity, and contribute to a sustainable and inclusive society.

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