

**FEMALE RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: FOCUS ON THE
SUCCESSFUL CASE OF “DOCES TAMBABA”**

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ABSTRACT

Women with an entrepreneurial spirit and passion are able to stimulate economic activity in rural regions, even when driven by need. In this context, Brazil is a country where being an entrepreneur through need has gained increasing relevance in the economy of rural communities, where women crucially become empowered to contribute to wealth creation by creating their own job. This study focuses on a successful business led by two black women in Brazil. Given the characteristics of the business here studied, netnography was used as the scientific methodology, something that has been used to study and observe elements of rural communities. The results obtained show that women are beginning to become empowered in

their rural communities, managing attractive, successful businesses, sustaining their families and contributing to their community's economic growth. The business studied here underlines that the contact with tourists was very motivating, and what is more, the entrepreneurial process brought a number of benefits to the rural settlement. There were gains in the fields of health, leisure, income, family life, employment, education and self-esteem, and benefits understood by the local inhabitants.

Keywords: Female rural entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurship through need; Emerging economy; Brazil

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is developed by people who create and/or take advantage of opportunities, and from this, carry out organised economic activity, creating value for themselves and society. Silva et al. (2015) believe these people are responsible for personal development and that of society, and in the case of women, this is a greater challenge.

In almost all countries there are gender differences in terms of citizenship, in social, educational and economic aspects and in relation to violence and other situations. A silent structure makes it more difficult for women to acquire rights, to have the same living conditions as men.

Especially in Brazil, there are even more hindrances, called "intersectionality", where black women (race issues), lesbians (sexual orientation), outsiders (related to place/class) and rurality (linked to territorial space) are subject to severe discrimination and inequality regarding human development.

Studies in Brazil indicate that for women, the accumulation of factors (gender, race, sexual orientation or identity, class and place of residence) increases inequality (Cesarino, 2020; López, 2016). There is an urgent need for strong action to break this vicious circle that diminishes access to work and full citizenship.

Gender discrimination has been studied for a long time, one of the pioneering authors being Scott (1995). This researcher defined that the term "gender is an element forming social relations based on the differences perceived between sexes... gender represents a primary way to give meaning to power relations".

Considering old, traditional practices in Brazil, women are believed to have no management ability, creating the perception that successful entrepreneurs are always linked to male stereotypes (Anambane and Adom, 2018). That negative perception in relation to gender affects female entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006).

One way to break down this barrier to employment and citizenship is through entrepreneurship arising from women's economic difficulties (Lima, 2019). In this way, women reduce the gap between gender, race and social, territorial and political conditions.

The entrepreneurial process promoting female empowerment is unique to each woman, according to her context, life story (family and community) and exposure to adverse factors,

among other aspects (Palma, 2016). Entrepreneurship can be a vehicle to change black women's status in the poor, rural region of North-East Brazil.

Entrepreneurship can be motivated by two factors: (1) perception of external opportunities (leading individuals to entrepreneurial work) and (2) having no other sources of income (through need, where individuals are engaged in entrepreneurship through a lack of options) (Jennings & Brush, 2013).

The World Economic Forum (2020), in the disclosure of the synthetic index Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) - report on gender inequalities, concluded that among more than 153 countries in the year 2020, Brazil occupied the 92nd position. This comes at a time when gender equality and empowerment are part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, whose actions involve implementing reforms that promote equal rights, access to economic resources, and ownership and control of land, particularly in rural women's communities (UN, 2015). However, previous studies have highlighted that despite the obstacles that still persist in Brazil, women have been gaining strength and creating their own businesses and besides being rural entrepreneurs, they also fulfil their role as mothers and housewives (Gimenes et al., 2017). The rural woman, who was previously more linked to domestic activities, started to assume activities previously considered as "masculine", being present in different production processes in the different rural productive activities (Rhein, 2016), assuming empowerment (Nath and Athinuwat, 2020). So, entrepreneurship through the need to provide for their family leads more and more Brazilian women to become entrepreneurs (Silva et al., 2016). These women embark on this when they see a market opportunity or simply to survive (Lima, 2019).

In this context, it is crucial to study rural female entrepreneurship in Brazil, given the emergency of expanding access and knowledge of women about the entrepreneurial world and how it promotes social transformation, leading other women to follow the same path, i.e., to create their own business in their rural communities. So, this study aims to show how female rural empowerment (led by two black women in an isolated part of a poor state in North-East Brazil) represented an opportunity for change in a small rural community, at a time when there is a modification in the dynamics of the Brazilian labour market. Women have started to occupy activities that used to belong mostly to men, as is the case of economic activities developed in rural areas, as shown by data from CEPEA (2018), which show that the participation of women in economic activities in rural areas has grown by 40% in recent years.

After the introduction, the following sections present the literature review, the methodology, the discussion of the results obtained and, finally, the conclusion.

2.0 GENDER INEQUALITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN BRAZIL

Differentiating between sex and gender is much discussed in the field of sociology, education and anthropology, but this is not the main focus of this study. Here, sex is understood to refer to biological categories and gender analyses the distinction and inequalities caused by society, for cultural, social, economic and political reasons, which attributes different roles to the sexes.

Gender inequality at work and in society exists in practically every country, but in Brazil, the disparity between men's and women's income is pronounced (Silva et al, 2018). Between 2009 and 2015, Brazilian men earned approximately 28% more than women doing the same work (Guimarães, 2019).

The neo-classical economic theory considers that each person receives as a salary reward the value of their contribution of input (work, capital or land) which adds to the production function. Therefore, the human capital theory postulates that work will be rewarded by the investments people make in their own education, training and healthcare (Santos, 2008). From this perspective, there should be no salary differences according to gender, but this is not the case. This discrimination challenges neoclassical theory by introducing an "irrational" component of unequal treatment of equally productive workers. It is imagined that the employer would use the attributes of sex and race as information, rather than assessing the potential productivity of the man and the woman.

The notion of gender as a social, structural and employment division emphasizes the idea that men, as a category, have more power than women, and this is no different in the context of female rural entrepreneurship.

Women have long worked in agriculture, but they are identified fundamentally by their domestic activities, which are not considered employment. This results in female work becoming invisible and non-recognition of the rural worker. Activities performed by women on the land are often considered only as help for the men (Maia et al., 2019).

As well as this social-structural "error", there is the issue of intersectionality, which according to Piscitelli (2008), carries the notion of "layering of oppressions". For example, in Brazil a black woman is doubly oppressed, as besides being a woman, there is the fact of being black. Intersectionality (or interconnectivity" or "multiplied identities") has a multiplying effect on women's disempowerment (Silva, 2020), making things even more difficult for a black, outsider, and rural women without basic education.

This study understands intersectionality as "a problem caused by the structural and dynamic consequences of two or more forms of subordination having a multiplying effect and creating more inequalities that structure the relative position of women, races, ethnic groups, classes and others".

Equality between men and women is a matter of human rights and a pre-condition for social, economic and sustainable development centred on people (Maia et al., 2019).

3.0 FEMALE RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Female empowerment consists of a process triggered by women's awareness of their role, their place and their possibilities. This awareness has the intention of making women position themselves, strengthen themselves and stand out in all fields of society, politics and the economy. As this is a dynamic process involving cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects (Oliveira & Freitas, 2017).

In the family dimension, female empowerment challenges the existing relations between men and women and their roles within the family, in the access to resources and advantages brought by professional and economic life (Fernandes et al., 2016). The role of the woman always relegated to the background changed radically, since now the entrepreneur makes her own decisions both in the business and in the family.

The economic dimension of female empowerment, the focus of this study, promotes gender equality in the labour market in relation to positions and income. It refers to the quality of women's economic involvement, providing them with financial independence, in addition to access to the labour market. According to Fox and Romero (2017), economic empowerment: "consists of the ability of women and men to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity, and enable the negotiation and fairer distribution of the benefits of growth." Economic empowerment includes and socially grows the empowered individual. It further reduces poverty and elevates the rights of the empowered being. Economic empowerment is seen as a subset of capacities mastered and recognised and linked to other factors that promote the development process of individuals, groups, communities and states (Fox & Romero, 2017)

Alves and Dandolini (2017), aimed at understanding entrepreneurship as a tool for female empowerment. The study revealed that the greatest satisfaction of women entrepreneurs is due to the ability to have their own business and this enables them recognition and decision-making power. With this, they gain autonomy, which provides them with self-fulfilment and allows new ideas to emerge.

Economic empowerment is one form of settling human beings in their places of residence, and in the case of women, reducing inequalities in relation to men. Therefore, female, rural entrepreneurship can be one way, involving matters of race, culture and social class, of favouring local development and preserving agricultural heritage. Indeed, the cultural environment individuals belong to influences their perception of entrepreneurial action (Wennberg et al., 2013), as the context an individual is a part of May, or may not, activate entrepreneurial action (Welter, 2011), and this also applies to female entrepreneurship (Woodside et al., 2016).

In this context, to become an entrepreneur, it is relevant to strengthen women's management competencies, as increasing their business knowledge also increases their entrepreneurial perception (Gavigan et al., 2020), and consequently, there will be a change in mentality (Bullock and Crane, 2021), reformulating cultural beliefs.

Another factor affecting female entrepreneurship is that entrepreneurial women often combine domestic tasks, childcare and work, interlinking domestic areas and creating a mixed environment (Markantoni and Van Hoven, 2012), meaning that their undertakings are smaller, with less income and fewer collaborators, compared to firms owned by men (Anna et al., 2000).

Decisions made by female entrepreneurs are marked by their individual capacities, always seeking to minimize the financial risk and avoid social disapproval and rejection (Bock, 2004), above all in the family. If on one hand the family can be considered an obstacle, on the

other, it can be a source of inspiration, as in this context women develop unique democratic leadership capacities, networking and relationship marketing (Buttner, 2001).

With this diverse preparation, the perception of women's individual capacities can flourish, and business plans based on nature (involving the land, forest, garden or rural environment) have significant growth potential (Sörensson and Dalborg, 2017). Considering this perception, rural entrepreneurship is a fertile area for female entrepreneurship.

In Scandinavian countries, for example, Swedish women engage in rural entrepreneurship due to perceiving various opportunities (Sörensson and Dalborg, 2017), while in Norway, motivations for female rural entrepreneurship are centred on immigrant women: (a) to escape unemployment or under-employment, (b) as a way to live in a more financially attractive region with a high quality of life; and (c) as a work option with satisfactory remuneration (Munkejord, 2017).

There is a similar situation in other countries when women choose rural entrepreneurship to become self-employed and ensure their family's survival (Marques et al., 2020).

In the north of Vietnam, women are linked to rural entrepreneurship, as they are attracted by the family's social capital, where children and male family members contribute to the work (Poon et al., 2012). In Turkey, women are motivated through the desire to become independent (Kalemci et al., 2017).

In general, female rural entrepreneurship is based on management that is: (1) private, frequently by younger women with more education and greater self-confidence, or (2) corporate, by older women with little education and who tend to be hesitant. (Koutsou et al., 2009).

In Brazil, Ratten and Jones (2021) found that entrepreneurship education is essential, as this can promote innovative activities, especially in the agricultural sector, through developing the entrepreneurial mentality in women. However, there is the problem of unequal opportunities based on gender.

GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) data indicate that in the group of initial entrepreneurs, women's participation is practically the same as that of men, but among established entrepreneurs (more than five years of activity), male participation is clearly greater (Felisbino and Yamaguchi, 2016).

According to SEBRAE (2015), in Brazil, females account for around a third of business people and potential business people. Among rural producers, female participation is only 14%, which may be associated with predominantly socio-cultural aspects. Historically, women were excluded from the process of inheriting land (Felisbino and Yamaguchi, 2016).

Finally, regarding female rural entrepreneurship, studies mention that women can contribute to keeping rural areas alive and creating production structures, leading to local development, preservation of agricultural heritage and consequently innovation in agricultural processes. Indeed, this matter is dealt with in the European Parliament, in Article 117 of the Giancarlo Scottá Regime (EFC), in the Directive (2010), where one of the priority objectives of the

European Union’s rural development policy: “is to improve the quality of lie in rural areas, where women are key actors, and a series of measures such as diversification, skills acquisition, training and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit”.

Women’s work, which is paid, valued, and with salaries the same as men’s, is fundamental, as in a society where almost everything is bought, economic empowerment allows individual income that develops both the household and wider society.

In this context, to assess female rural entrepreneurship, this study used the dimensions proposed by Ruderman and Rogolsky (2014), who state that authenticity can be achieved from the combination of five characteristics, represented in Figure 1: (1) values, priorities and clear personal preferences; (2) acceptance of the need for choices and commitments in life; (3) a strong sense of self-determination; (4) the desire to align values and behaviours, and (5) a high level of comfort and satisfaction with previous choices. In addition, (6) experience and innovation are complementary factors for successful female entrepreneurship (Martini et al., 2020)

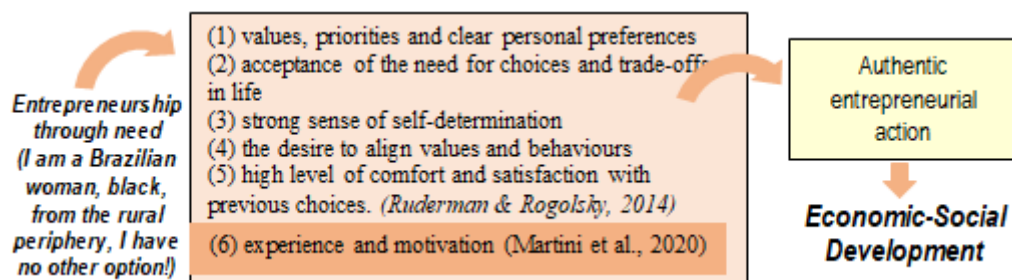


Figure1: Authentication of the Female Rural Entrepreneur through Need

Added to the Ruderman and Rogolsky (2014) model of five characteristics was (6) Experience and innovation from Martini et al. (2020), which allowed authentication of the female rural entrepreneurial process, in this case, the “Shopping Tambaba (Doce Tambaba)” business.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Entrepreneurship should be studied in its wider context, seeking research using concepts of sociology and the entrepreneur’s pragmatic thought set out from ethnographic research (Watson, 2013), in order to understand peripheral social phenomena. Ethnography or the study of individual life stories can help here, as this method allows perception of the transition process and course of life of the individual (Holman Jones, 2007).

With the great growth of computational databases, the neologism of “netnography” (nethnography = net + ethnography) appears, leading to the methodological challenge: data-mining on the computer network, in the digital environment, to “observe actors”, preserving the details of observation in the ethnographic field (Rodrigues Correia et al., 2017).

Netnography is a research method based on participatory observation and online fieldwork, which uses the different forms of computerized communication as the source of data for

understanding and ethnographic representation of cultural and communal phenomena. It is therefore an inductive approach to the analysis of qualitative data (Kozinets, 2014).

This is a methodological tool that expands the possibilities offered by traditional ethnography, by allowing the study of objects, phenomena, and cultures that are recorded in cyber-space, from the development and social appropriation of information and communication technology (Corrêa and Rozados, 2017), and is very appropriate in this analysis. This method is an adaptation of ethnographic research that considers the characteristics of digital environments and computerized communication.

Considering the objective defined, netnography is appropriate for this study, since it is a scientific methodology used to observe communities, present on the internet, regarding the influence on the lives of their members (Hine, 2005). Corroborating this argument, "netnography is a readily adaptable methodology offering a specific set of steps and analytical approaches, applicable across a wide spectrum of involvement, from lurking to active participation in online conversations and activities. Netnographies can be short and focused on a single community or involve years of research within multiple communities. They utilize videos, images, and sounds as well as textual data. Netnographies can stand alone or be combined with other research methods on online communities, including offline member interactions."(Costello et al., 2017, p.9)

According to Kozinets (2014), for data collection and treatment, information should be gathered and copied directly from the pages and online communities of interest, where due to the great amount of information and doubts, this can be checked through another research technique. Therefore, the data were recognized as follows:

(a) The viewing objects of the netnography were websites (all those chosen were necessarily publicly available):

- i. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LklrXIp_NWk
- ii. <https://doces-tambaba.negocio.site/>
- iii. <https://www.facebook.com/cazinhadodoce/>
- iv. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZJw21N_yls
- v. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tgMX9b2v0k>
- vi. (vi)<https://turismoemfoco.com.br/v1/2018/10/14/historia-da-casa-dos-doces-de-tambaba-e-contada-em-documentario/>
- vii. <https://pt.foursquare.com/v/doces-tambaba/549d4a90498e598692518d4c>

(b) To complete the information and clarify doubts, two interviews were held on location, accompanied by photographs and filming, with the permission of those involved, "Dona Luíza and Nevinha", who authorized publication.

From the model in Figure 1, the next section presents authentication of the female rural entrepreneurship process, in this case, of the "Shopping Tambaba (Doce Tambaba)" business, led by black women from a peripheral rural community. "Dona Luíza" (matriarch) and "Nevinha" saw an opportunity to stop selling fruit products at the roadside and set up a point of sale in a "Taipa" house (traditional house in inland North-East Brazil built of wood and clay). These two women began selling a small production of homemade sweets and some

craft goods. Now the place has been transformed into an open-air, rural, shopping center and is one of the main tourist destinations in Paraíba, a poor state in Brazil.

In the Brazilian context, there is great significance regarding this case, as there are a number of difficulties associated in this emerging country:

(1) Extreme poverty in the rural periphery region where the shopping was developed: The region was not provided with piped water or sanitary sewerage and had a very poor rural electricity supply structure. Therefore, there was no prospect of any kind of local development.

(2) Lack of full educational training of the businesswomen: In addition, it is known that professional skills are a basic element for development, and "Dona Luiza" and "Nevinha" did not even know how to read and/or write.

(3) The fact that they are women, in the region where the rural shopping was developed, from these two women, structural masculinity is predominant. Women (still today, in nearby regions) are seen as people who should devote themselves to looking after the children, cooking and at most "working the hoe", because "taking the money home" is a man's role.

(4) The fact that they are black, there has been in Brazil, since the time of its colonisation, a mixture of races (native Indians, white Europeans and the black African). In the 16th century the idea was created that the Indians "were not capable human beings" and the blacks "were inferior beings", to justify slavery and free labour. Of course, the slavery period has officially ended in Brazil since 1888, however remnants of this evil idea still linger in the mind of the Brazilian society

Thus, in Brazil, (a) to live in the periphery of extreme poverty without structure, (b) to be a woman, (c) black and (d) without professional training, is synonymous with succumbing to and continuing in extreme poverty. The rural shopping mall of "Dona Luiza" and "Nevinha" should be studied because it is a very rare case of success, which should be disseminated as a Case Study involving Gender, Race and Women's Empowerment and imitated, in Brazil and in other countries that suffer from the same structural problems.

5.0 THE CASE OF "DOCES TAMBABA" – RURAL SHOPPING CENTRE

Entrepreneurship in Tambaba Rural Community, in Conde, on the south coast of the State of Paraíba, called Doces Tambaba – Rural Shopping Centre began in 2013 with "Dona Luiza" (family matriarch) and her daughter "Nevinha". These two women cannot read or write and are owners of a small area in Tambaba Rural Settlement, a place with minimum physical structure, water or basic sanitation, where they were settled due to the lack of any other options.

Before this rural business, "Nevinha" walked the 500 metres or so every day to the perimeter to sell cashew sweets (fruit from north-east Brazil) by the roadside. However, this woman had the idea of transforming her "taipa" house (made of clay and straw) into a "rustic house selling regional products".

She borrowed around U\$10 to buy sugar and condensed milk, to increase the quantity and variety of homemade sweets from the fruit she picked round about, the first sweet to be sold, from guava, being made from the fruit of the tree in front of her house.



Photo 1: “Dona Luiza” and her daughter “Nevinha”

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LklrXIp_NWk

Maria das Neves da Silva Pereira, Nevinha, arrived in this settlement on 4 August 1986 together with 260 families. According to the interviewee:

- “When we arrived here, this was just woodland, and all the coconut palms, it was us who planted them. We began to gather wood and transform it into charcoal to sell. We had no opportunity to study, as when we arrived here I was eight years old and there was no school, so I worked by digging. I lived as I could, I fished... we ate what we had, flour we made and cassava or something else we planted. My sisters managed to study in the flour house in the lamplight, but not me. I can’t read, I can only sign my name, but I give thanks to God, as where I’ve got to today, I can sign my name. I dream about reading the bible one day”.

5.1. Business Characteristics

These women’s business presents distinct characteristics according to their evolution and growth. It passed through 6 stages, described as follows:

a) The beginning: We placed the sweets on a table under the cashew tree and began to sell them. There was one day when we earned around 5 dollars, so we thought: we’ll make more. But there was only one flavour (coconut with guava), so we decided to use bananas.

b) Initial difficulties with basic infrastructure: Before, we started to make the sweets in my mother’s kitchen, but it was very cramped, and when I managed to buy an industrial cooker, it became even more so. We peel the fruit outside, and the tourists arrive, look and take photos. The neighbours helped us, opened the coconut, and prepared the mixture. We now make more than thirty types of sweets.

c) Family involvement: Before it was Dad that opened the coconuts, but he can’t manage now, he’s got a bad back, he stays sitting on the balcony selling the coconuts (for the tourists to drink the milk), and he jokes with everyone – he says that the coconut is free, you only pay for the straw. Today, our father is happy. Before we were isolated here, we didn’t see anyone. Now people come here.

d) Partnerships: I think the work of the buggy drivers (people who work transporting people in open carts called buggies) is really good. They bring tourists here, they’re our partners.

e) Business growth: We are growing, yes, but it was only when we appeared in the newspaper in the capital, saying that our “Sítio Tambaba” was a tourist highlight in Paraíba, then we really started to grow.

f) Personal empowerment: The first time they took me to present our products at a fair, I saw I had some buggy-driver friends there. They asked me what the secret of my success was and I said: A round of applause for them, our partners who take tourists there.

Passing through all these stages has led to the Rural Shopping Centre today being formed of nine houses, as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Rural Shopping Centre houses segmented according to family member and product



House 1 - Sale of sweets of various flavours



House 2 – Sale of chestnuts and derivatives



House 3 – Sale of fruit and pulp



House 5 – Sorbets



House 4 – -Sale of liquor



House 6 – Beach fashion



House 7 – Sale of coconuts

House 8 – Crafts and hats

House 9 – Sale of Tapioca

Source: Own photos

5.2. Authentication and Analysis of the Female Rural Entrepreneur through Need

From the perspective of female rural entrepreneurship, the business of Does Tambaba – Rural Shopping Centre arose from the social and emotional motivation of two women, as well as the fact of living in a depressed area.

They started a small business and expanded to the surrounding region. This pattern agrees with the studies by Markantoni and Van Hoven (2012), who state that small-scale economic activities contribute to a better quality of life and greater well-being. This becomes clear from the analysis of Table 2:

Table 1: Dimension of Authentication X Emerging Discourse

Dimension (Figure 1)	Emerging discourse
(1) values, priorities and clear personal choices	I would like us to serve as an example for all women who think they have no talent, there’s no solution, they can’t do things. I think that all women are capable, wherever they are. This place wasn’t what everyone sees today, it was formed by our work, it was dead. This here didn’t exist, there was a group of little houses, each person in their own. We learned to receive tourists gradually, one step at a time. ”
(2) acceptance of the need for choices and trade-offs in life	Her other four sisters and brothers-in-law have no confidence in her, but with no other form of sustenance, she paints her house in bright colours and <i>“in front my colourful house, under the cashew tree, I receive in an informal way all customers with happiness and a smile on my face”</i> . <i>“My husband believes in my work and helps me in everything, so I can call him a good husband”</i> .
(3) strong sense of self-determination	“Everything I say, I tell you, it was the strength my mother gave me, and she’s old now. I thought about giving up, it was a lot of work at the beginning, and she said: Nevinha, this is going ahead, we won’t give up, God is good and will protect us, and we’ll have a lot of tourists here. My mother said to me: Never give up, our sweets will be famous worldwide”
(4) the desire to align values and behaviours	I don’t know how to read, but today I’m proud because I have a certificate as a speaker at a State craft fair. We don’t have all the machines yet, that’s why our sweets are only sold here, but one day we’ll sell everywhere in Brazil. The

	people don't just buy sweets and liquor, they buy a life story.
(5) high level of comfort and satisfaction with previous choices.	Besides the wonderful countryside of Paraíba, the local commerce also surprises. The Rural Shopping Centre began modestly, selling only two types of sweet. Over time, it became better known, letting the business grow, and it turned into this charming place, full of life and with many delightful products to taste.
(6) experience and innovation	With rising sales, the entrepreneurs did training courses, understanding the need to create a label for the products with the production and sell-by date; notions of marketing (although very basic) and active notions of an inclusive economy, involving tourist guides, local farmers and other local agents. Two years after starting up, it was included in the development association – SEBRAE, which in Brazil is the entity that helps develop micro and small firms.

Source: Interview with “Dona Luiza” and “Nevinha”

In this context, the motivation for female rural entrepreneurial activity in regions with a declining population and low economic expectations was confirmed, since the patterns are: (1) maintaining links with the land and ownership, (2) preserving traditional foodstuffs, and (3) job creation (Cunha, Kastenholz, & Carneiro, 2018).

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The characteristics of entrepreneurship, such as persistence, seeking opportunities, initiative, commitment, persuasion, and self-confidence are present in these women who started up Does Tambaba – Rural Shopping Centre, a result that agrees with the studies by da Silva et al. (2015) as characteristics of entrepreneurial women.

The process of creating the business studied here began with a loan of the equivalent of 10 dollars and arose from a strong desire to overcome financial difficulties and no longer work for others (they were cooks in restaurants 5km away).

The women studied here to underline that the contact with tourists was very motivating, and what is more, the entrepreneurial process brought a number of benefits to the rural settlement. There were gains in the fields of health, leisure, income, family life, employment, education, and self-esteem, benefits understood by the local inhabitants.

The whole female rural entrepreneurial process gave the initiators a better view of the world, affecting their self-image: in the way, they feel freer and independent.

The opportunity to manage their own business, with positive impacts on the family income, job creation, and visible growth of society, contributed to those women choosing the right path.

Besides the visible economic-social evolution around Tambaba, at the personal level, these women clearly demonstrate they feel empowered, showing they chose the right path via female rural entrepreneurship. In this case, this type of entrepreneurship represents a business and becoming self-employed and independent, consequently, a way of deciding the direction of one's life.

The business directed by black, illiterate women from the rural periphery has transformed a place and reduced social, structural, and work division where men generally have more power than women, and this agrees with the studies by Maia et al. (2019), who say that “thanks to work, women have reduced the gap between them and men; only work can ensure real freedom”.

The leader of SEBRAE states: “It wasn’t easy, the entrepreneur wants to come and find everything ready. Those women took the lead and we only arrived here later. They put in a lot of hard physical work, and never gave up even faced with all that cropped up”.

A suggestion would be to study other rural undertakings in North-East Brazil, such as the case of the “Daughters of Santa Luzia Community Association - St. Campo de Pouso, São Benedito-CE” or “Liquor producers or banana palm straw crafts in Areia na Paraíba” and compare with undertakings in Portugal, such as the small businesses of “Craft Wine Production” or “Olive Oil Production”.

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