

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Women's economic empowerment through Nugraha Women Farmer Group: An initiative fostered by the agricultural extension agency in Cirumput Village, Sukabumi Regency

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Abstract

The Nugraha Women Farmers Group (KWT) located in Selaawi Village, Sukaraja District, Sukabumi Regency, is a form of village women's institution engaged in the processing of agricultural products. Established in 2002 under the guidance of the Agricultural Extension Agency (BPP) of Sukaraja District, KWT consists of 32 women who are active in producing chips, selling rice, and managing various foods based on local agricultural products. This study aims to examine the role of KWT Nugraha in empowering women's economy through post-harvest activities, as well as identifying obstacles faced in the aspects of institutional development and member participation. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the study show that KWT Nugraha contributes to increasing household income and strengthening women's social solidarity. However, challenges still arise, such as the weak sustainability of coaching from extension workers, low business literacy, and lack of mastery of technology and market access. Group activities tend to be passive if they are not driven by administrators or external parties. This study recommends the need for strengthening the capacity of administrators, ongoing training, and support for village policies that favor women's economies based on local institutions.

Keywords

Women Farmers Groups, Women's Economic Empowerment, Agro-processing, Local Economic Development, Capacity Building.

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Women's economic empowerment constitutes a core development strategy to redress resource access inequalities, bolster women's bargaining power in households and communities, and foster active engagement in productive activities (Crittenden et al., 2019; Kunto & Bras, 2018; Ochman & Ortega-Díaz, 2020). As conceptualized by Sharaunga et al., (2019), empowerment integrates resources, agency, and achievements, enabling women to exercise strategic life choices. In this context, the Women Farmers Group (KWT) serves as a vital mechanism for cultivating rural women's agency in the independent and sustainable management of economic resources.

KWT Nugraha, established in 2002 in Selaawi Village, Sukaraja District, Sukabumi Regency, exemplifies such a grassroots institution. Initiated under the guidance of the Sukaraja District Agricultural Extension Agency (BPP), the group comprising 32 women focuses on post-harvest processing, including chip production, rice sales, and local commodity-based foods, thereby addressing strategic gaps in the agricultural value chain rather than primary cultivation. Institutionally, KWT Nugraha reflects key dimensions of social capital norms, networks, and trust as outlined by Halstead et al., (2021), with its leadership structure (chairperson Titi Kawati, secretary Nailah, treasurer Nopi) acting as an internal driver of sustainability. Challenges persist, however, notably in sustaining member participation, which often turns passive without external motivation from management or extension agents.

Inconsistent technical guidance from bodies like BPP remains a primary barrier to institutional strengthening, signaling incomplete internalization of empowerment values. Within participatory development frameworks (Chambers & Foster, 1983), genuine group empowerment depends on local initiative and autonomous adaptive capacity. Additional constraints include limited managerial literacy, business innovation, digital access, and market connectivity. Products lack standardized quality and packaging, curtailing market expansion, while low youth involvement risks long-term stagnation and succession gaps (Buheji, 2019).

Existing studies on Indonesian Women Farmers Groups (KWT) largely emphasize their contributions to household income and women's social participation (Giyarsih et al., 2026). However, these investigations remain predominantly descriptive, under-exploring institutional determinants of long-term sustainability such as leadership succession, social capital consolidation, and the efficacy of external facilitation. Comparable challenges in rural women's groups, including donor dependency, managerial weaknesses, and limited integration into formal market systems, are widely documented in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (Cornwall, 2016; Elson, 1999). This highlights a persistent research gap in understanding how externally initiated women's institutions evolve into autonomous, resilient entities.

By situating KWT Nugraha within this discourse, the present study contributes through an institutional-process lens, examining how empowerment is negotiated, sustained, or constrained in everyday organizational practices. Departing from outcome-focused views of KWT as static income tools, this research frames KWT Nugraha as a dynamic institution shaped by social capital, leadership agency, participatory governance, and external support. Integrating Kabeer's empowerment framework with Putnam's social capital theory in rural Indonesia, it elucidates pathways beyond extension dependency, identifying thresholds for autonomy, regeneration, and resilience. This article assesses KWT Nugraha's role in enhancing rural women's economic capacity, identifies institutional challenges, and proposes strategies for strengthening agriculture-based processing groups (Chakunda, 2023). Findings aim to inform evidence-based policy and localized development models responsive to rural women's actual needs.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section discusses relevant literature and theoretical perspectives on women's economic empowerment, local institutional development, and community-based group dynamics. The discussion is divided into four parts: (1) the concept of women's economic empowerment, (2) the role of local institutions such as women's farming groups, (3)

the importance of social capital and participatory development, and (4) the hybrid empowerment framework used in this study.

2.1 | Women's Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment refers to the process by which women gain access to and control over productive resources, enhance their agency, and achieve financial independence (Lal, 2021; Morse & McNamara, 2013; Sharaunga et al., 2019). In rural contexts, empowerment is closely related to women's ability to participate in community institutions, manage productive activities, and influence household decision-making (Kannan & Jain, 2013; Prodig, 2021). Empowered women are more likely to contribute to family welfare, child education, and local economic development (Doepke & Tertilt, 2019).

Several studies emphasize the transformative role of women's groups in promoting entrepreneurship, microfinance, and household resilience (Ranabahu & Tanima, 2022). However, the sustainability of these groups often depends on external facilitation, leadership capacity, and support from government institutions (Igalla et al., 2020). Without consistent guidance, many rural women's groups become inactive or regress to informal savings circles without broader economic function (Kabeer, 2016).

In this context, the Women Farmers Group (KWT) serves as a strategic institutional mechanism to operationalize economic empowerment at the village level. By engaging in post-harvest processing, product commercialization, and collective decision-making, KWT members are able to exercise agency, build social capital, and generate sustainable income streams independent of external interventions. Yet, the effectiveness of such groups depends not only on individual participation but also on organizational capacity, leadership continuity, and access to market and technological resources. Understanding these institutional dynamics is crucial for designing interventions that transform temporary support into long-term autonomy, ensuring that women's empowerment extends beyond immediate financial benefits to structural and intergenerational change in rural communities.

2.2 | Women Farmers Groups

Kelompok Wanita Tani (KWT), or Women Farmers Groups, were initially established to support women's participation in agriculture. Over time, many evolved into community-based microenterprises engaged in food processing and marketing (Sharma & Shenoy, 2024). These groups play a significant role in developing local institutional capacity and enhancing women's collective bargaining power (Parwez, 2017).

In the case of KWT Nugraha, the group's formation under the guidance of the Agricultural Extension Agency (BPP) reflects the institutional logic of state-supported group formation. However, the sustainability of such groups relies not only on formal support but also on internal leadership and member engagement (Afsar et al., 2020; Fahmy et al., 2024). The presence of a committed chairperson and structured management as seen in KWT Nugraha may ensure operational continuity, but it also reveals vulnerability when the leadership becomes inactive or disengaged.

Beyond formal leadership, the effectiveness of KWTs like Nugraha is strongly influenced by the social capital embedded within the group. Trust, mutual support, and shared norms among members facilitate cooperation in economic activities, decision-making, and conflict resolution. These social networks not only sustain day-to-day operations but also enhance resilience against external shocks, such as fluctuating market demand or reduced extension support. In KWT Nugraha, the solidarity among 32 members creates a foundation for collective action, yet sustaining engagement remains a challenge, particularly when younger generations show limited interest in participating or when routine activities become dependent on a few active members.

Moreover, the capacity of KWT Nugraha to transform member participation into tangible economic outcomes is constrained by gaps in managerial literacy, technological adoption, and market integration (Gries et al., 2018; Sindakis & Showkat, 2024). While members possess practical skills in agricultural processing, limited knowledge of financial management, product standardization, and digital marketing restricts opportunities for

scaling up production and accessing broader markets. These challenges underscore the need for continuous capacity-building programs, participatory leadership development, and intergenerational inclusion strategies to strengthen both the internal governance of the group and its long-term sustainability. Addressing these institutional dimensions is essential to ensure that empowerment extends beyond income generation to foster autonomy, resilience, and community development.

2.3 | Social Capital and Participatory Development

Social capital defined as the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation plays a central role in rural empowerment (Lei et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2023). Women's groups such as KWT depend heavily on bonding capital (internal solidarity) and bridging capital (external linkages) to access markets, government support, and learning opportunities.

Participatory development theory also emphasizes the need for bottom-up, community led initiatives (Fox & Stoett, 2016; Owen, 2020). However, in practice, many KWTs remain donor or state dependent, with limited autonomy in decision-making. The absence of participatory planning often leads to mismatches between training programs and the real needs of members (Afzalan & Muller, 2018; Swapan, 2016).

2.4 | Hybrid Empowerment Framework

This study employs a hybrid framework that combines Avelino, (2017) empowerment theory with institutional development and participatory governance. The goal is to understand empowerment not only in terms of individual outcomes but also collective agency and group sustainability. The model also considers the interplay between external support (extension services, government facilitation) and internal dynamics (leadership, motivation, cooperation) that shape the long-term effectiveness of KWTs like Nugraha.

By using this framework, the study examines the multidimensional nature of rural women's empowerment: economic, social, organizational, and structural. This approach also allows for critical reflection on how informal institutions like KWT can evolve into sustainable economic actors in local development.

Furthermore, this hybrid framework enables the identification of key institutional thresholds that influence the sustainability of women's groups. By linking empowerment outcomes to organizational capacity, social capital, and participatory governance, the framework highlights how internal leadership, member engagement, and collective decision-making interact with external facilitation to produce lasting impact. This approach not only captures the immediate economic benefits of KWT activities but also examines long-term processes such as leadership succession, intergenerational participation, and market integration. As a result, the study provides a comprehensive lens for understanding how community-based women's groups can transition from externally supported initiatives into autonomous, resilient institutions that contribute to inclusive rural development.

3 | METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the dynamics of women's economic empowerment through KWT Nugraha in Desa Selaawi, Kecamatan Sukaraja, Kabupaten Sukabumi. The qualitative method is suitable for capturing social processes, participant perspectives, and institutional behavior in their natural settings (Katz, 2015; Seamon & Gill, 2016).

The focus of the research is to understand how institutional structures, leadership dynamics, and external facilitation interact in shaping the effectiveness of KWT as a community-based women's economic initiative. The case study method was chosen to provide a comprehensive and context-sensitive analysis of a single group, which allows for in-depth exploration of both structural and personal experiences (Nguyen & Tull, 2022).

Data collection was conducted through multiple qualitative techniques, including in-depth interviews with KWT members and management, participant observation of group activities, and document analysis of meeting records, financial reports, and training materials. This triangulation of data sources enhances the validity and

reliability of the findings by capturing diverse perspectives and corroborating observed practices with institutional records (Gibson, 2017; Schlunegger et al., 2024). Additionally, thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns related to empowerment, leadership, social capital, and organizational sustainability, allowing the study to connect individual experiences with broader institutional processes. This methodological design ensures a nuanced understanding of how KWT Nugraha functions as both an economic actor and a vehicle for women's collective empowerment in a rural Indonesian context.

3.1 | Research Site and Informants

The research was conducted in KWT Nugraha, located in Desa Selaawi, Kecamatan Sukaraja, Kabupaten Sukabumi, West Java. This group was selected due to its longevity (established in 2002), structured leadership system, and sustained engagement in agricultural product processing, including chips, rice packaging, and various home-based food products. Its operational history and organizational structure make it an ideal case for exploring how community-based women's groups evolve over time and navigate challenges related to empowerment, institutional sustainability, and market integration.

Informants were selected purposively to ensure that multiple perspectives within the group and its supporting institutions were represented. The sample consisted of 10 individuals, including the KWT chairperson (Titi Kawati), secretary (Nailah), treasurer (Nopi), several active members, and two agricultural extension officers from the BPP Sukaraja. This approach allowed the study to capture insights from leadership, membership, and external facilitation, highlighting how internal governance and external support jointly shape the group's operations and effectiveness.

Data collection employed a combination of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document review, including meeting minutes, financial records, and training reports (Ranney et al., 2015). Interviews focused on members' experiences, leadership practices, decision-making processes, and challenges in sustaining economic activities, while observations provided contextual understanding of group interactions and operational routines. Triangulating these sources strengthened the validity of findings, and thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns related to empowerment, social capital, leadership dynamics, and organizational resilience. This methodological design ensures a comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of how KWT Nugraha functions as both an economic actor and a vehicle for women's empowerment in a rural Indonesian setting.

3.2 | Data Collection Techniques

Data were gathered using three techniques: (1) in-depth semi-structured interviews, (2) participant observation during group meetings and production activities, and (3) document analysis including activity logs, training materials, and financial records.

During the data collection phase, the interview guide was developed based on a review of relevant literature and the research objectives related to women's economic empowerment and institutional aspects of the group. The guide was pilot tested to ensure clarity and relevance before being applied to the study participants. Data saturation was determined when additional interviews no longer yielded significant new information, indicating that the data collected were sufficient to address the research questions. To maintain objectivity and minimize researcher bias, triangulation of data sources and methods was employed, along with peer debriefing sessions and continuous critical self-reflection throughout the research process.

The interviews explored informants' understanding of empowerment, challenges faced, participation levels, and perceptions of institutional support. Observations were used to understand group interactions and leadership behavior, while document analysis complemented findings with factual and historical information.

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3.3 | Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Dawson, (2002), which includes three key steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data reduction phase, information from interviews, observations, and documents was condensed by identifying meaningful units related to leadership initiative, group participation, sustainability challenges, and the role of external actors. The data display phase involved organizing these units into matrices and thematic charts to visualize patterns and relationships, while the conclusion drawing/verification phase focused on interpreting findings and ensuring their accuracy through triangulation.

Triangulation was applied by comparing data from interviews, observations, and institutional documents to enhance validity and reliability. Member checking was conducted by returning preliminary findings to key informants, including the chairperson, secretary, and active members, for feedback and confirmation. This process not only validated the accuracy of the findings but also encouraged participant reflection on group practices and institutional dynamics.

Furthermore, thematic analysis was employed to explore how internal leadership, member engagement, social capital, and external facilitation interact to shape the effectiveness and sustainability of KWT Nugraha. By connecting individual experiences with broader organizational and social processes, this approach allowed the study to capture the multidimensional nature of women's economic empowerment. The analysis also highlighted the mechanisms through which empowerment is sustained or constrained within a community-based institutional setting, providing insights that are directly relevant for designing interventions to strengthen the capacity, autonomy, and resilience of women's groups in rural Indonesia.

3.4 | Validity and Ethics

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, this study applied the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Detailed field notes were maintained throughout the research process, and direct quotes from participants were recorded with their informed consent to accurately represent their perspectives. Triangulation of data sources and member checking further strengthened the credibility of the findings by cross-verifying information and interpretations.

Ethical considerations were also prioritized in this study. Although formal institutional approval was not required, prior coordination was conducted with village authorities and the BPP Sukaraja to secure community consent and support. All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting to protect the privacy and integrity of all participants.

4 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the principal findings derived from the fieldwork conducted among members of KWT Nugraha and critically discusses them in relation to the theoretical frameworks of women's economic empowerment, social capital theory, and participatory rural development. The empirical evidence is systematically organized into four interconnected thematic clusters: (1) the institutional structure and functional role of KWT Nugraha as a women-led collective organization, (2) the multifaceted economic benefits and livelihood improvements experienced by participating members, (3) the key institutional, operational, and external challenges that impede long-term group sustainability and scalability, and (4) evidence-based strategic recommendations aimed at enhancing organizational resilience, autonomy, and developmental impact. By integrating qualitative insights from in-depth interviews, participant observations, and group discussions with the conceptual lenses of Kabeer's empowerment framework (resources–agency–achievements) and Putnam's social capital dimensions (networks, norms, and trust), this analysis elucidates how a grassroots women farmers group in rural Sukabumi Regency operates simultaneously as an economic micro-enterprise, a platform for social learning, and a mechanism for incremental gender equity within household and community contexts.

4.1 | Institutional Role of KWT Nugraha in Women's Economic Empowerment

KWT Nugraha, established in 2002 in Selaawi Village, Sukaraja District, Sukabumi Regency, has evolved into a significant and enduring platform that enables rural women to collectively organize and engage in productive economic activities. Although the group deliberately refrains from primary farming activities, it occupies a strategic and complementary position in the agricultural value chain by specializing in the processing and marketing of locally sourced products, including banana chips, packaged rice, and various traditional snacks. This focused role not only adds value to raw commodities but also creates consistent income opportunities for its members in a rural setting where access to formal employment remains limited.

The group functions under a clearly defined formal structure, with Titi Kawati serving as chairperson, Nailah as secretary, and Nopi as treasurer, ensuring orderly administration and accountability. Regular monthly meetings are convened to systematically discuss production schedules, equitable division of labor, marketing strategies, financial planning, and profit distribution, thereby promoting transparency and collective decision-making. According to the members themselves, KWT Nugraha delivers more than just supplementary household income; it cultivates a profound sense of collective identity, mutual support, and shared purpose that strengthens social cohesion and personal motivation among participants.

This institutional arrangement closely reflects Kabeer, (2016) conceptualization of empowerment through group-based agency, wherein women progressively gain access to productive roles that extend well beyond traditional domestic confines and begin to exercise greater control over economic resources. The group's demonstrated capacity to manage shared resources, coordinate joint activities, and maintain operational continuity over more than two decades indicates a maturing level of organizational capability, even though many day-to-day decisions still depend heavily on informal consensus, personal initiative, and intrinsic motivation rather than fully formalized procedures. Such characteristics highlight both the strengths and the transitional nature of the group's institutional development in fostering sustainable women's economic empowerment within a rural Indonesian context.

4.2 | Economic Impact and Livelihood Enhancement

Participation in KWT Nugraha delivers tangible economic benefits to members at the household level. By producing and selling processed agricultural products such as banana chips, packaged rice, and traditional snacks women generate supplementary income that is distributed fairly based on labor and capital contributions. These modest earnings enable reinvestment in small ventures, children's education, healthcare, and daily essentials, creating multiplier effects that incrementally improve living standards and household economic security in rural settings.

Beyond financial gains, involvement strengthens intra-household dynamics and women's empowerment. Regular group activities build practical skills, managerial knowledge, and self-confidence, allowing members to engage more actively in family budgeting, resource allocation, and long-term planning. This shift enhances women's bargaining power and promotes equitable decision-making, aligning with evidence that greater female control over resources prioritizes investments in human capital and family well-being (Doepke & Tertilt, 2019; Majlesi, 2016).

Although income remains modest compared to formal sectors, the group's impact is significant for household resilience and broader empowerment. Incremental earnings address critical needs like nutrition and education, while shared labor and collective marketing reduce individual market risks. Non-monetary benefits—such as skill-sharing, stronger social networks, and heightened self-esteem—further nurture social capital and personal agency, positioning KWT Nugraha as a holistic platform for sustainable economic progress, gender equity, and community inclusion in rural Indonesia (Fan et al., 2021).

4.3 | Challenges in Group Participation and Institutional Support

Despite its success, KWT Nugraha faces several limitations. First, many members are passive and only participate when activities are actively pushed by the leadership. Without regular motivation or clear production targets, participation levels drop significantly. This pattern indicates weak internalization of collective ownership, a key issue in sustaining community-based organizations (Abrams et al., 2015; Becker et al., 2018).

Second, the group's dependency on external guidance, particularly from BPP Sukaraja, remains high. While the group was formed under government facilitation, continued capacity-building support has been sporadic. As a result, technical gaps persist, especially in product development, marketing strategies, and digital literacy (Gries et al., 2018; Sharaunga et al., 2019). Third, the lack of youth involvement has emerged as a serious concern. The group is predominantly composed of middle-aged and older women, with limited interest from younger generations. This threatens long-term sustainability and raises the need for intergenerational knowledge transfer (Halstead et al., 2022; Mariwah et al., 2019).

Addressing these challenges will be crucial for KWT Nugraha to evolve into a truly self-reliant and resilient organization. By strengthening internal motivation through shared goals and incentives, gradually reducing reliance on external facilitators via structured training programs, and actively engaging younger members through appealing activities, mentorship schemes, and digital integration, the group can secure its future relevance and impact. With deliberate efforts in these areas, KWT Nugraha has the potential to serve as a sustainable model for other women-led farmer groups in the region.

4.4 | Strategies for Strengthening KWT Nugraha

To overcome the identified institutional and operational constraints, targeted strategies should be implemented to enhance the group's autonomy, resilience, and long-term sustainability. First, structured capacity-building initiatives must be prioritized, encompassing entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, and digital marketing skills. Partnerships with local universities, agricultural cooperatives, or private-sector CSR programs could effectively address existing gaps in technical expertise and provide sustained guidance (Afzalan & Muller, 2018; Hede Skagerlind et al., 2015). Such interventions would enable members to improve product standardization, packaging quality, and online market access, thereby diminishing dependence on localized sales and external facilitation.

The strategic positioning of KWT Nugraha can be further elucidated through a SWOT analysis, which systematically assesses internal strengths and weaknesses in relation to external opportunities and threats. This analytical framework identifies leverage points for intervention while highlighting risks that require proactive mitigation. Table 1 presents and organizes the key factors across the classic SWOT categories (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). By doing so, it reveals the interconnections between the group's internal capabilities and the external environment, as well as their combined influence on the sustainability and future development of KWT Nugraha.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of KWT Nugraha, Selaawi Village.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Operating since 2002 with a stable institutional structure	Reliance on managerial motivation	Support from the village government and BPP	Activities can be passive without internal movers
Products based on local agricultural products (chips, rice, processed foods)	Low managerial and digital literacy	Local market open for healthy processed products	Competition of manufacturers' products in the local market
Members are loyal and have a sense of community	Minimal regeneration of young members	Potential partnerships with local cooperatives or MSMEs	Uncertainty of external coaching continuity

This analysis serves as a basis for determining the most appropriate interventions, both from internal restructuring and external institutional support.

Second, internal leadership development should be prioritized through rotational leadership or committee-based planning to distribute responsibilities and reduce over-reliance on one or two individuals. This approach aligns with participatory governance practices that foster inclusive decision-making and shared ownership (Auckland & Kilpatrick, 2018; Springer et al., 2020). Third, village-level policy support is essential to formalize the role of KWT in local economic development. This includes allocating village funds for group activities, integrating KWTs into local food supply chains, and promoting youth participation through targeted incentives.

This study has several limitations. First, the sample is confined to members of KWT Nugraha in Selaawi Village, which may introduce selection bias and limit generalizability to other Women Farmers Groups in diverse contexts. Additionally, data from interviews and observations are susceptible to social desirability bias, where respondents may offer idealized responses. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific and may not apply broadly without appropriate adaptation.

5 | CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

KWT Nugraha in Desa Selaawi, Kecamatan Sukaraja, has demonstrated its role as a significant grassroots institution in promoting women’s economic empowerment through agricultural product processing and commercialization. Over more than two decades of operation, the group has provided rural women with avenues for income generation, skill development, and social engagement, enabling them to exercise greater agency in household and community economic decisions. The structured leadership system, comprising a chairperson, secretary, and treasurer, combined with strong internal solidarity among its 32 members, has fostered resilience in organizational operations. Nevertheless, structural challenges such as passive member participation, limited managerial literacy, low youth involvement, and reliance on external support pose risks to the group’s sustainability and indicate that empowerment is not fully internalized.

The study further illustrates that empowerment within KWT Nugraha is a multidimensional process contingent on both internal capacities and external facilitation. Social capital, manifested in norms, trust, and networks, plays a critical role in sustaining cooperative action and strengthening the group’s institutional identity (Deng et al., 2021; Tregear & Cooper, 2016). The active engagement and skill improvement of women members reflect tangible outcomes of empowerment, enhancing their economic decision-making and social cohesion. However, gaps in leadership regeneration, technological adoption, and market integration highlight the limitations

of current practices, underscoring the need for strategic interventions that go beyond short-term income generation to ensure long-term autonomy, innovation, and institutional continuity.

Based on field observations and SWOT analysis, this study proposes comprehensive recommendations to strengthen KWT Nugraha as a model of sustainable women's economic empowerment. Key measures include consistent capacity building in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, product quality standards, and digital marketing; leadership succession planning with participatory rotation mechanisms; and targeted strategies to involve younger generations through technology integration and incentive structures. Formal recognition of KWT within village development agendas and collaborative partnerships with cooperatives, universities, and private sector actors can further enhance market access, mentorship, and institutional resilience. The active engagement of government, NGOs, and community leaders is critical to sustaining these interventions, creating a synergistic ecosystem that not only empowers individual women but also contributes to inclusive and sustainable rural development.

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Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct or interpretation of this research.

Data Availability Statement

The data used in this study, including interview transcripts, observation notes, and related documents, are confidential and accessible only to the authors to protect the anonymity and privacy of the participants in accordance with qualitative research ethics. Raw data are not publicly available; however, summaries of the findings can be shared upon reasonable academic request.

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