
The Role of the Village Government in Women's Empowerment Through Women Farmers' Groups (KWT)

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ABSTRACT

Women Farmers' Groups (KWT) is an effort to encourage sustainable and equitable village development. This research examines the role of the Village Government in empowering women through KWT in Pajambon Village, Kramatmulya District, Kuningan Regency, West Java. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of the Village Government in supporting the implementation of women's empowerment activities through KWT. A qualitative descriptive research method was used, with data collected through interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The validity of the data was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods by comparing information obtained from interviews and field observations and by combining the results obtained. The aim was to obtain a more accurate picture and strengthen the data collected in the study. The results of this study indicate that the Village Government has successfully played a role as a facilitator and companion in empowering women through KWT. This study also recommends the need for training in marketing so that the products produced by KWT can become better known to the wider community.

Keywords: Women's Empowerment; Village Government; Women Farmers' Groups; Role of Village Government; Village Development.

INTRODUCTION

Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, as amended by Law Number 3 of 2024, provides opportunities for villages to regulate their own governance and community empowerment. One example of community empowerment in villages is the *Kelompok Wanita Tani* (KWT).

Kelompok Wanita Tani (KWT) are part of community empowerment, as they represent an inclusive process regardless of gender. Gender refers to the differences between women and men in their roles, behaviors, and activities (Anez et al., 2024). KWT provides a platform for village women to increase their capacity, skills, and economic independence through agricultural activities and agro-processing (Noercholis et al., 2025; Prajuliyanto, 2025). Through KWT, it is hoped that village women can become agents of change, contributing to increased family income and community well-being (Kertamukti et al., 2025; Umam, n.d.; Wuryan et al., 2025).

The National Statistics Agency (BPS Indonesia) reported in February 2025 that the Labor Force Participation Rate (TPAK) for men was 84.34%, while for women it was 56.70%. This difference indicates that there is still a gap in women's participation in employment opportunities, which ultimately affects economic aspects such as family income and women's economic independence (Daraz et al., 2025; Goldin, 2022; Rangaswamaiah, 2024; Rughoobur-Seetah et al., 2023; Voumik et al., 2023). Women's empowerment in villages is part of village development efforts because, with strong women, villages will grow. Therefore, efforts to

empower women through KWT are crucial so that village women become more active in economic activities and can strengthen the village economy.

Several previous studies have examined the role and impact of KWT in community empowerment. Research by Evendi & Prayoga (2020) highlights that KWT plays an important role in improving family income and strengthening local economic resilience. Similarly, Nopita et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of empowerment strategies within KWT, particularly through agricultural-based activities that enhance women's skills and participation. Furthermore, Muharomsyah (2024) found that the active participation of women in KWT significantly contributes to improving household economic conditions. Other studies, such as Widyantono & Kusumaningrum (2022) and Rusli et al. (2022), also underline that KWT serves as an effective medium for increasing women's productivity, social interaction, and economic independence.

However, most of these studies primarily focus on the economic impact and empowerment strategies within KWT, while limited attention has been given to the role of the village government as a key actor in facilitating, supporting, and sustaining these empowerment activities. In fact, the village government plays a crucial role in providing policy support, resources, coordination, and institutional strengthening to ensure the sustainability of KWT programs. Previous studies have focused solely on KWT empowerment strategies and economic contributions, with none examining the role of village governments in supporting and fostering women's empowerment activities through KWT. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on reviewing the role of village governments and providing a new perspective by positioning them as key actors in women's empowerment activities through KWT, particularly in the aspects of facilitation, coaching, and mentoring that support KWT activities.

The urgency of this research is to reaffirm how the village government plays a role in building and developing the village by involving all members of the community, including women, in a fair and equitable manner. "Fair and equitable" refers to how the village government treats its members equally. This research is expected to provide a practical contribution to the Pajambon Village Government in strengthening women's empowerment, particularly through the processing of local potential products, namely red guava fruit. This research is also expected to serve as an example for other villages on how to enhance the role of KWT as a vehicle for equitable and sustainable community development. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of Public Administration, particularly in studies on village development and community empowerment.

The aim of this study is to analyze the role of the village government in supporting the implementation of women's empowerment activities through KWT and to provide an overview of how the village government acts as a facilitator, supporter, and mentor in developing the capacity of village women to help improve family finances. Through this analysis, the researchers hope to provide an in-depth explanation of village government involvement in women's empowerment activities through KWT.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The study was conducted in Pajambon Village, Kramatmulya District, Kuningan Regency, West Java. The research object was the Pajambon Village Government, while the research subjects were the Village Head, the Head of the KWT (Family Welfare Movement) Group (KWT), KWT members, the Head of the PKK (Family Welfare Movement) Working Group 3 in the District, and the Agricultural Extension Workers (PPA) from the Agricultural Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD).

This study used primary and secondary data collection techniques, namely interviews, observation, documentation, and literature review. Key informants in this study were the Village Head and the Head of the KWT, while supporting informants were KWT members, the Head of the PKK Sub-district Working Group 3, and Agricultural Extension Workers (PPA) from the Agricultural Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD).

To ensure data validity, researchers used Source and Method Triangulation, which involves comparing and combining information obtained from various sources. The goal was to obtain a more accurate picture and strengthen the data collected in the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pajambon Village has local agricultural potential, with its leading commodity being red guava. Pajambon Village can harvest 20 tons of red guava per year. Some of the harvested fruit is sold to middlemen, while the rest is processed into crackers, dodol (sweetened sticky rice), juice, and guava noodles by the local KWT (Farmers Group).

Pajambon Village has two Women Farmers Groups (KWT), namely KWT Lembah Ciremai which is managed independently by one of the village community and KWT Green Moyan which is one of the programs of the PKK Pajambon Village. The two KWTs have differences in producing local potential products, KWT Lembah Ciremai focuses on producing Cuhcur Cake, Guava Crackers and Guava Dodol, while KWT Green Moyan focuses on producing Cassava Chips, Sweet Potato Balls, Guava Noodles and Guava Juice.

KWT in Pajambon Village and all KWT in Kuningan Regency are directly guided by the Department of Food Security and Agriculture through the Agricultural Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD). The Agricultural Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) is a Technical Implementation Unit of the Department of Agriculture under the supervision of the Department of Food Security and Agriculture. The Pajambon Village KWT is guided by a Field Agricultural Extension Officer (PPA) from the Jalaksana Agricultural Technical Implementation Unit, Mr. Yodi Kurniadi S.ST. The Field Agricultural Extension Officer (PPA) has the task of acting as a bridge between the Department of Food Security and Agriculture, the village, and KWT. Mr. Yodi, as the Field Agricultural Extension Officer (PPA), works directly in the field to understand the situation and conditions within the KWT. This guidance is carried out to directly understand the products made by the KWT and what assistance the KWT needs. Through this guidance, the KWT is also provided with training on agriculture, processing agricultural products, and packaging. Mr. Yodi also monitors and evaluates every activity carried out by the KWT. According to Mr. Yodi, the KWT leaders and the village government have been cooperative in communicating regularly regarding KWT activities.

Communications are conducted through social media platforms like WhatsApp and in-person field visits to report on KWT activities. Mr. Yodi then compiles these reports for submission to the Food Security and Agriculture Agency.

KWT Lembah Ciremai is an independent Women Farmers Group (KWT) that was founded in 2008. This KWT was initiated by one of the Pajambon residents who currently holds the position of Head of Pajambon Village, namely Mrs. Nani Ariningsih. This KWT was founded because at that time, the Pajambon Village community received training on food processing production from the Kuningan Regency Agriculture Service. Then after that, Mrs. Nani took the initiative to form a KWT with the aim of empowering village women. The initial product made by KWT Lembah Ciremai was Cuhcur Cake made from rice flour, then KWT Lembah Ciremai distributed the Cuhcur Cake to several Kuningan souvenir centers such as Teh Diah, Ibu Sepuh, Dewi Merauke, Azzahra, and Berkah . The Cuhcur Cake made by KWT Lembah Ciremai is in demand by many consumers, resulting in satisfactory results.

The processed products from the village's local potential (Red Guava Fruit) into processed Dodol and Crackers, is an innovation from the Head of the KWT Lembah Ciremai, Mrs. Nani. This innovation arose because not all ripe Red Guava Fruit was sold, therefore the idea of Dodol and Crackers made from Red Guava so that unsold fruit would not be wasted. The production process for processed products from KWT Lembah Ciremai is carried out once a week. However, if there is a holiday such as Eid al-Fitr, the production process can be carried out every day so that KWT gets more income or turnover than usual due to the high market demand. However, KWT Lembah Ciremai currently faces its own challenges in the marketing section. Because, even though it has collaborated with various well-known souvenir shops in Kuningan Regency, product competition in marketing cannot be avoided. In addition, weather factors and Red Guava Fruit harvests also affect the production of Dodol and Guava Crackers, so that the production of these two processed products cannot be done every day.

KWT Lembah Ciremai has 6 members, these 6 members were appointed directly by Mrs. Nani according to their expertise in their respective fields, such as making Cuhcur Cake, making Guava Crackers, making Guava Dodol, and wrapping Guava Dodol. According to KWT Lembah Ciremai members, this KWT has helped increase the income of its members. Through this KWT, members also have new activities besides taking care of the household, children, and husbands. In addition, according to KWT Lembah Ciremai members, this KWT is truly a place to increase the capacity, abilities, skills of members and a place to socialize and collaborate.

KWT Green Moyan is a Women Farmers Group established in 2022. KWT Green Moyan is included in the PKK work program initiated by Mrs. Selfi as the Chairperson of the PKK to realize her vision of empowering women. KWT Green Moyan has 14 members recruited directly by the Chairperson of the PKK and all of its members are PKK Cadres. Therefore, this KWT is included in the PKK activity report which is reported directly by the Chairperson of KWT Green Moyan to the Chairperson of the Kramatmulya District PKK Working Group 3, Mrs. Rohmah SP, then after from the District PKK, it is reported back to the Chairperson of the Kuningan Regency PKK Working Group 3. Once a year, the Kuningan Regency PKK Working Group 3 carries out Regional Development activities. Regional Development is an activity of coaching, monitoring and evaluation of activities carried out by the KWT. Regional Development in each village is carried out by the District Working Group

3, then after that one of the villages is selected as a representative of the Fostered Village to carry out Regional Development in the Regency.

The results of the interview with Mrs. Rohmah as Chair of Working Group 3 of Kramatmulya District, Mrs. Selpiyanti as Chair of the PKK of Pajambon Village and Chair of the Green Moyan KWT, have coordinated well in reporting every activity carried out by the PKK of Pajambon Village including KWT activities. In the report explains the activities of KWT and documentation of KWT activities. Mrs. Rohmah also explained that empowering women through the Women Farmers Group (KWT) is a good strategy to help and increase household income. Because in fact, housewives in the village do not have many opportunities to earn additional income. Through this KWT, it is hoped that housewives or women can have useful activities to develop themselves and improve the family economy.

The Green Moyan Women's Group (KWT) was established to process harvested sweet potatoes and cassava and local potential products (red guava), ensuring that ripe crops are not wasted if unsold. This is because some of the harvest is sold to middlemen, while others are processed into products such as cassava chips and dried cassava balls. However, due to less promising market conditions for selling processed sweet potatoes and cassava, this KWT ultimately focused on processing red guava into guava juice and guava noodles.

KWT members directly experience the impact of their presence, including economic and social support. Furthermore, they enjoy the activities within the KWT, as they allow them to socialize and collaborate , and gain new activities beyond being housewives.

KWT Green Moyan markets its products by selling directly at the Pakuwon Agrotourism site. However, this is also an obstacle experienced by the KWT, because in marketing it only relies on one location and has not yet established cooperation with external parties such as KWT Lembah Ciremai which has collaborated with Toko Oleh-Oleh. KWT Green Moyan has tried to market its processed products through social media, but due to busy activities and limited human resources, social media is not operating optimally so marketing is only done directly at the Pakuwon Agrotourism site.

The results of interviews with the Chairperson and Members of KWT Lembah Ciremai and KWT Green Moyan, the Pajambon Village Government has played a role in mentoring, providing facilities and infrastructure, and playing a major role in collaborating with the Department of Manpower and Transmigration of West Java Province and the Department of Food Security and Agriculture of Kuningan Regency), Private Sector (BRI Bank in BRILian capital assistance) and Educational Institutions (PPK ORMAWA UNIKU, KKN UGJ, KKN Universitas Prasetiya Mulya, and so on), which can help improve skills and abilities through the provision of training, and obtain assistance in the form of facilities or production tools needed by the two KWTs. Although KWT Lembah Ciremai is an Independent KWT, the Pajambon Village Government remains fair in acting as a facilitator and supporting community empowerment, especially women through KWT by providing capital in the form of production tools to KWT Lembah Ciremai.

Ms. Nani Ariningsih is the Village Head of Pajambon who has served as the Village Head of Pajambon for two terms. The first period was from 2016 to 2021, then the second period from 2021 to 2029. In accordance with Law Number 3 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, the term of office of the Village Head has been increased from the previous 5 years, now it is 8 years.

The Head of Pajambon Village has seen the KWT as a significant aid in village development, particularly in increasing community income and boosting the village economy. The KWT in Pajambon Village has also had a positive impact on village women because through this KWT, the Village is able to empower the community, especially women, to achieve economic independence and increase income. According to Mrs. Nani Ariningsih, the Head of Pajambon Village, the support provided by the Village Government to the KWT in Pajambon Village is through capital in the form of facilities such as production equipment. In addition, the Pajambon Village Government also collaborates with the Manpower and Transmigration Office of West Java Province and the Food Security and Agriculture Office of Kuningan Regency, to provide mentoring and training in product manufacturing. In addition, collaboration with private parties such as Bank BRI for capital and cooperation with educational institutions such as PPK ORMAWA UNIKU which provided the Guava Noodle innovation, KKN Universitas Prasetiya Mulya and KKN UGJ which provided grants in the form of production equipment for the two KWT in Pajambon Village.

The Pajambon Village Government has provided facilities in the form of production aids, supported KWT by collaborating with government agencies, banks and educational institutions to obtain assistance in the form of more modern production tools that can assist in the production process and held trainings that can increase knowledge and insight for the two KWTs. The Pajambon Village Government has also implemented the five dimensions in the theory of Community Empowerment by Suharto (2009), namely; Enabling , Empowering , Protecting , Supporting , and Fostering .

Enabling in the form of implementing policies regarding Community Empowerment in accordance with Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages as amended by Law Number 3 of 2024 , where the Pajambon Village Government has empowered its community, especially women, through the Women Farmers Group (KWT).

Strengthening or empowerment in the form of training obtained from relevant agencies such as the West Java Provincial Manpower and Transmigration Office and the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office. The Pajambon Village Government has established numerous collaborations with relevant agencies to increase capacity, skills, and enhance knowledge and insight for both KWTs.

Protection or Protecting, namely fulfilling women's rights to be treated and empowered fairly regardless of gender in accordance with Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages as amended by Law Number 3 of 2024 and Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2021 concerning Community Participation in the Field of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection.

Support in the form of providing capital assistance in the form of facilities or production tools to the Women Farmers Group (KWT), through this support, production activities carried out by the two KWTs can be carried out effectively and efficiently.

Maintenance or Fostering in the form of establishing good cooperation with the Field Agricultural Extension Officer (PPA) of the Jalaksana Agricultural UPTD & Head of the Kramatmulya District PKK Working Group 3 to carry out supervision, guidance and evaluation in every activity carried out by the KWT.

Therefore, based on the results of research conducted by researchers, it can be concluded that the Pajambon Village Government has succeeded in carrying out its role as a

provider of facilities (facilitator), supporter, and mentor in empowering women through the Women Farmers Group (KWT).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Pajambon Village Government has effectively fulfilled its role in empowering women through Kelompok Wanita Tani (KWT), as evidenced by the implementation of the five dimensions of community empowerment proposed by Suharto (2009): enabling, empowering, protecting, supporting, and fostering. The village government has acted as a facilitator, supporter, and mentor by providing facilities, production tools, training, and establishing collaborations with stakeholders such as government agencies, private institutions, and educational organizations, while also demonstrating strong coordination and supervision through partnerships with Agricultural Extension Officers (PPA) and the PKK Working Group. These efforts align with Law Number 6 of 2014, as amended by Law Number 3 of 2024, particularly in advancing inclusive village development and community empowerment. However, challenges remain, especially in marketing, where KWT groups face increasing competition and limited market access. Therefore, strengthening marketing capacity—particularly in digital marketing—and expanding market networks are recommended to enhance sustainability, competitiveness, and economic impact. Future research is suggested to explore the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies and cross-sector partnerships in improving the market reach and long-term resilience of KWT programs.

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