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Women's Participation in the Family Income Enhancement Business (UP2K) Program in Linggar Village, Rancaekek District, Bandung Regency

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the importance of women's participation in the Family Income Improvement Program (UP2K) as an effort to increase women's involvement and economic independence in Linggar Village, Rancaekek District, Bandung Regency. Although the program has been implemented, women's involvement in the program has not been evenly distributed. This study aims to examine and analyze women's participation in the UP2K Program and identify the factors that support and hinder such participation. This research employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation involving informants related to the implementation of the UP2K Program in Linggar Village. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was assessed through source and technique triangulation. The results show that women's participation in the UP2K Program is demonstrated through their involvement in decision-making, program activities, utilization of program benefits, and evaluation. However, participation remains uneven, as some women are not actively involved in the program. Supporting factors include women's willingness and motivation, the economic benefits of the program, accessibility of capital, relationships among members, and family support. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include limited information and socialization, limited capital, domestic responsibilities, time constraints, concerns about installment payments, and limited skills and marketing capabilities. The study concludes that increasing women's participation requires stronger socialization, broader access to the program, and support that is more responsive to women's circumstances and domestic responsibilities.
Keywords: Women's participation, UP2K, women's empowerment, supporting factors, inhibiting factors.

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality remains a significant challenge in Indonesia's development process. This inequality is evident not only in the economic sector but also in women's limited access to productive resources, their minimal involvement in formal economic activities, and their low participation in decision-making processes. This situation indicates that women continue to face structural barriers that hinder them from reaching their full potential. Therefore, gender-responsive development is a crucial element in achieving equitable and sustainable development.

Indonesia Gender Inequality Index Table

Year	Gender Inequality Index (GII)
2020	0,472
2021	0,465

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2022	0,459
2023	0,447
2024	0,421
2025	0,402

Source: Processed from 2025 Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data.

The data in the table above shows that Indonesia's Gender Inequality Index (GII) value declined from 0.472 in 2020 to 0.402 in 2025. This decrease indicates an improvement in gender equality in Indonesia.

One manifestation of gender inequality is the low level of female participation in the labor market. Women's involvement in economic activities is crucial for supporting family well-being and driving the community's economic progress.

Table of Female Participation in the Labor Market

Year	**TPAK Female**
2023	54,52%
2024	56,42%
2025	56,63%

Source: Processed from BPS data, "Women and Men in Indonesia"

Gender disparities remain evident in the labor market. According to 2025 data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS), the female Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) stood at only 56.63%, compared to 84.40% for men. This significant gap indicates that women continue to face various obstacles to participating optimally in productive economic activities. To support women's empowerment and improve family welfare, the government collaborates with various stakeholders, notably through the Family Empowerment and Welfare Movement (PKK). This role is reinforced by Presidential Regulation Number 99 of 2017 concerning the Family Empowerment and Welfare Movement, which designates the PKK Movement as a government partner in fostering empowered and prosperous families by implementing work programs tailored to community needs.

One initiative within the PKK Movement aimed at enhancing family welfare is the Family Income Enhancement Business Program (UP2K-PKK). This program serves as a platform for

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family economic empowerment, focusing on building the capacity of the community particularly women to develop productive economic ventures by leveraging the potential and resources available within families and their local environments. Although the UP2K program has received support through various national policies and stands as a flagship program of the PKK Movement, its implementation across different regions has not always been optimal.

A similar situation exists regarding the implementation of the UP2K program in Linggar Village, Rancaekek District, Bandung Regency. Preliminary interviews conducted by the researcher with the Head of the Linggar Village UP2K unit revealed that the program was launched in 2022 as an effort to empower women economically through the Village PKK Steering Team. Women's participation in the UP2K program in Linggar Village is inextricably linked to the local community's socio-economic conditions. Initial interviews with the UP2K Chairperson and the Village Service Section Head revealed that most women in the area are economically active, working in the industrial sector surrounding Rancaekek. However, after completing their formal employment, these women still face domestic responsibilities such as managing the household, caring for children, and meeting family needs which can limit the time and opportunities available for them to participate in community activities, including the UP2K Program. Beyond the social circumstances of the program's target demographic, the implementation of the UP2K Program in Linggar Village also faces various institutional challenges. Preliminary interviews with the Linggar Village UP2K Chairperson indicated that budget constraints are a key factor limiting the number of participants able to receive guidance and assistance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Government Governance

According to R. A. W. Rhodes, governance is a process involving a network of interdependent actors both governmental and non-governmental in decision-making and the resolution of public issues. Rhodes posits that the government no longer operates within a hierarchical framework; instead, it functions primarily as a coordinator, fostering collaboration with the public and various other organizations. Consequently, the success of a development program is largely determined by the quality of the relationship between the government and the public the beneficiaries of the policy.

Gender Theory in Politics

According to Joan W. Scott, gender serves as an analytical category for understanding social relations formed based on constructed differences between men and women. Scott’s perspective frames gender not merely as a category for distinguishing between women and men, but as a social construct linked to symbols, norms, identities, institutions, and power relations. Consequently, gender

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analysis is crucial for understanding how social constructs, the division of roles, access, and power relations influence women's opportunities to participate in various development sectors, including government-led economic empowerment programs. Scott explains that gender comprises four interrelated elements: cultural symbols, normative concepts, social and organizational relationships, and subjective identities.

Participation Theory

Cohen and Uphoff (1977) suggest that community involvement is a crucial factor in the implementation of development programs, as the success of a program depends not solely on the government as the policymaker but also on the active participation of the community as beneficiaries. In the context of participatory development, the community is viewed as an active agent of development with the right to be involved at every stage of the program, from planning to evaluation. Therefore, participation signifies more than mere physical presence; it encompasses decision-making, activity implementation, the utilization of outcomes, and the assessment of the ongoing program. According to Cohen and Uphoff, community participation in development manifests in four primary forms: participation in decision-making, participation in implementation, participation in benefits, and participation in evaluation. These four forms demonstrate that participation extends beyond mere involvement in carrying out activities; it encompasses engagement ranging from the decision-making process to the assessment of activity outcomes.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method within a constructivist paradigm to analyze women's participation in the Family Income Enhancement Business (UP2K) program in Linggar Village, Rancaekek District,Bandung. Six informants were selected using purposive sampling: the UP2K group leader, two program participants, two non-participants, and one village government representative. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis followed the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis of participation was based on the four dimensions identified by Cohen and Uphoff (1977) decision-making, implementation, benefit utilization, and evaluation while supporting and inhibiting factors were examined through the perspectives of governance and Joan W. Scott’s gender theory. Data validity was verified through source and technique triangulations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

These four indicators are used to determine whether women act merely as beneficiaries or are

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also involved in the program's planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. This analysis is crucial because meaningful participation requires space to voice opinions, opportunities to contribute, access to benefits, and the chance to provide input for program improvement. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with six informants, and document review. Women's participation was analyzed based on the four indicators established by Cohen and Uphoff (1977): decision-making, implementation, utilization of results, and evaluation. Women who are members of UP2K have internal avenues for participation though levels of involvement vary whereas access for non-participating women remains limited.

Women's Participation in the Family Income Enhancement Program (UP2K) in Linggar Village

In general, participation is more readily found among women who are already registered and active in groups. While this facilitates activity coordination, it also has the potential to limit the program's reach if outreach and the recruitment of new participants are not conducted openly. Therefore, the success of UP2K should be measured not only by the continuity of group activities but also by the program's ability to reach women who are not yet involved.

The implementation of UP2K is coordinated by the TP-PKK and the group participants. Deliberations serve as a forum for discussing needs, while training, guidance, marketing support, and capital assistance are directed toward developing the participants' businesses. Participation is influenced by factors such as membership status, socioeconomic conditions, employment, household responsibilities, and access to information.

Women's Participation in Decision-Making

These findings indicate the existence of opportunities for participation, though the extent of the participants' influence on decision-making warrants further attention. Deliberations would be more inclusive if the agenda were distributed in advance, participants' views were recorded, and decisions along with subsequent actions were communicated back to the members. Involving women who are not program participants in outreach activities or open forums could also broaden the understanding of the needs and obstacles they face. UP2K participants can voice their opinions during meetings and deliberations; several proposals such as product packaging training and installment relief were reportedly accepted, although final decisions remain subject to the management's established procedures. Women who are not participants lack equal access to internal forums and generally learn about the program through informal channels.

Women's Participation in the Implementation of the UP2K Program

Thus, participation in implementation depends not solely on individual willingness but also on the design of the activities. Flexible training schedules, practical materials, and mentoring that takes

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into account business rhythms and household chores can help improve attendance consistency. Clearly defined task allocation within groups also has the potential to reduce the burden on specific members. Participation in implementation is evident through involvement in group activities, training, business development, and the fulfillment of group obligations. Engagement is contingent upon time availability, business capacity, and domestic responsibilities; consequently, not all participants are able to consistently attend every activity.

Women's Participation in Utilizing Program Outcomes

The utilization of outcomes must also be assessed based on the participants' ability to sustain benefits in the medium term for instance, through improvements in product quality, packaging, and basic financial record-keeping, as well as the expansion of sales channels. Capital support is more effective when accompanied by business management knowledge and ongoing mentoring. In this way, the program's benefits extend beyond mere access to financing and can actively support business growth. The program offers benefits such as access to capital, business knowledge, guidance, and opportunities to improve products and marketing. The results achieved depend on the participants' ability to apply the guidance received and effectively manage their businesses. Women outside these groups still have limited access to the program's benefits.

Women's Participation in the Evaluation of the UP2K Program

More systematic evaluation can be conducted through periodic meetings, simple feedback forms, and the documentation of follow-up actions based on participant input. This approach helps organizers identify the most beneficial activities, recurring challenges, and future training needs. Engaging women outside the group can also provide insight into whether the program is widely known and accessible. Evaluations are currently carried out through communication with organizers and by gathering accounts of participant experiences, but they do not yet fully reach women who are not participants. A regular, documented feedback mechanism is needed to ensure that evaluations serve as a basis for program improvements.

Discussion

The Cohen and Uphoff framework helps distinguish between forms of participation that are often treated as a single, undifferentiated whole. A participant may be active during implementation yet not necessarily wield the same level of influence over decision-making or evaluation. Therefore, assessing participation requires considering the depth of engagement at each stage, as well as the equality of opportunity for different groups. Applying the Cohen and Uphoff (1977) framework, participation is evaluated not merely by attendance or the receipt of assistance, but also by influence on decisions, contributions to implementation, utilization of outcomes, and involvement in evaluation.

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Findings indicate that UP2K has created opportunities for empowerment, yet access to and the quality of participation remain uneven.

Women's Participation in the UP2K Program

Substantively, the findings indicate that UP2K has provided a platform for participation through groups and empowerment activities. However, participation is not yet fully inclusive, as access to information and forums tends to favor existing members. Strengthening the program requires linking internal group participation with broader village-level outreach so that non-participating women also have the opportunity to learn about, consider, and join the program. Deliberative meetings offer participants space to propose activities, yet access remains largely limited to active members. In practice, participation is influenced by work and domestic responsibilities. The benefits are evident in access to capital and business development, though evaluation processes need to be more structured and inclusive. Therefore, participation should be assessed based on tangible impact and equitable access, rather than merely the number of members.

Factors Influencing Women's Participation in the UP2K Program

These factors do not operate in isolation. Limited information, for instance, can reinforce the perception that UP2K is merely a loan program. Simultaneously, time constraints can hinder women's ability to attend outreach sessions or training. Consequently, enhancing participation requires a complementary approach involving information dissemination, improvements to program services, business mentoring, and the tailoring of activities to participants' circumstances. Enabling factors include the existence of groups and their leadership, consultative mechanisms, participants' productive business activities, and support from the PKK and village government. Conversely, obstacles include limited capital and mentoring resources, unequal access to information, the perception of the program as solely a loan scheme, as well as domestic burdens and varying levels of family support.

Factors Supporting Women's Participation

These supporting factors can be strengthened through regular communication between organizers and participants, the mapping of business needs, and the dissemination of easily understandable information. Training tailored to the participants' specific types of businesses will enable groups to apply their knowledge directly. Partnerships with village institutions and other supporting entities can also open up marketing opportunities and expand the reach of guidance and support. Support from organizers, consultative forums, the existing business skills of the women involved, ongoing guidance, and capital support provide a foundation for participation. The PKK organizational structure also facilitates coordination and communication among members.

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Factors Hindering Women's Participation

These obstacles demonstrate that increasing participation requires more than simply inviting women to take part in activities. Programs must also ensure that information reaches prospective participants, schedules allow for attendance, and the program's benefits are fully explained. Consistent support can help minimize misunderstandings while building trust in the empowerment objectives. Key challenges include limited budgets and support, information gaps preventing outreach to all women, time constraints due to family responsibilities, and misconceptions regarding the program's goals. These barriers limit the expansion of participation and hinder sustained engagement.

Implications of Strengthening Women's Participation

Operationally, organizers can begin by mapping out women who either run businesses or are interested in starting one, identifying their needs, and then structuring activities based on priorities. Evaluation indicators may include involvement in deliberations, attendance and contributions to activities, utilization of training or capital, and the number of inputs acted upon. These steps help ensure that participation is monitored in a measurable way and serve as a basis for program improvement. Strengthening participation requires open outreach to women who are not yet participants, business-specific training, periodic mentoring, expanded market access, and evaluations that involve both participants and the wider community. Flexible scheduling and communication with families can also help reduce domestic barriers.

CONCLUSION

Research findings indicate that women's participation in the Family Income Enhancement Program (UP2K) in Linggar Village is evident across four stages: decision-making, implementation, utilization of outcomes, and evaluation. However, this participation remains concentrated among women already enrolled in the program, whereas women outside the groups face limited access to information and activity forums. Factors supporting participation include the motivation to improve family finances, program benefits, access to capital, and interpersonal relationships among members. Conversely, inhibiting factors include limited dissemination of information, constraints on program resources, concerns regarding capital repayment, time constraints due to employment and domestic responsibilities, business instability, and a lack of guidance on skills and marketing. These findings demonstrate that women's participation is determined not only by individual motivation but also by access to information, resource availability, socio-economic conditions, and program implementation mechanisms.

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