
**A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR CREATING WOMEN-LED
COOPERATIVE MODELS IN ELDERLY MEAL SERVICES SUB
THEME - HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COOPERATIVES**

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ABSTRACT

Women-led elderly meal services have emerged as an important form of care-based micro-entrepreneurship, addressing both livelihood generation and the growing nutritional needs of an ageing population. However, these services often operate informally and face sustainability challenges due to limited resources, lack of institutional support, and operational inefficiencies. Anchored in cooperative theory and human development perspectives, this conceptual paper proposes a women-led cooperative model for elderly meal services and strategically analyses its feasibility and sustainability. The study has two key objectives: first, to propose a structured women-led cooperative model for delivering elderly meal services; and second, to strategically analyse the proposed conceptual framework using established strategic analysis tools. A conceptual research design is adopted, supported by an extensive review of literature on women entrepreneurship, cooperative models, and elderly care services. The proposed conceptual framework positions the women-led cooperative model as the independent variable influencing the sustainability and effectiveness of elderly meal services through mediating cooperative mechanisms such as shared procurement, standardization of operations, joint branding, and collaborative training. External environmental factors, including policy, economic, technological, legal, and social conditions, are incorporated as moderating variables. The framework is analysed using PESTLE analysis, SWOT analysis, Michael Porter's Five Forces Model, and Value Chain Analysis. The findings suggest that the cooperative framework enhances operational efficiency, service quality, and institutional resilience while promoting women's economic

empowerment and community-based elderly care. The study contributes theoretically by integrating cooperative and strategic management perspectives within care-based women entrepreneurship.

KEYWORDS: *Cooperative Model Development, Community-Based Services, Human Development through Cooperatives, Sustainable Cooperative Models, Women Entrepreneurship.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Population ageing has emerged as a significant demographic trend across both developed and developing economies. In India, the increasing proportion of elderly citizens, combined with changing family structures, urban migration, and rising female workforce participation, has intensified the demand for reliable and affordable elderly care services (Butsabong, & Ritcharoen, 2025). Among these services, home-style meal provision for the elderly has gained prominence due to its direct impact on nutrition, health, and quality of life.

Women-led elderly meal services have emerged as informal, community-based micro-enterprises that address this growing social need while simultaneously creating livelihood opportunities for women (Kawuryan, Zunaidah, Hamdani, & Rahman, 2025). These enterprises are often characterized by personalized service, trust-based relationships, and strong community embeddedness. However, despite their social relevance, most of these initiatives operate informally and face challenges such as inconsistent pricing, limited scalability, lack of financial planning, and minimal institutional support (D'Silva, & Bhat, 2022).

Cooperatives, grounded in principles of collective ownership, democratic governance, and mutual benefit, offer a viable organizational framework to address these challenges. From a human development perspective, cooperatives have historically played a crucial role in promoting inclusive growth, women's empowerment, and community welfare. This paper therefore proposes a women-led cooperative model for elderly meal services and strategically analyses its feasibility and sustainability using established strategic analysis tools.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Women Entrepreneurship in Care-Based Services: The literature on women entrepreneurship highlights that women-led enterprises are predominantly concentrated in care-based and home-oriented activities due to socio-cultural norms, gendered roles, and limited access to capital and formal markets (Brush et al., 2009; Minniti, 2010). Women

entrepreneurs are often motivated by both economic necessity and social objectives, particularly in service sectors linked to caregiving and community welfare. However, despite strong commitment and social orientation, women entrepreneurs face persistent structural barriers such as financial exclusion, limited institutional support, lack of managerial training, and restricted market access (Ahl & Nelson, 2015). Scholars argue that these constraints result in women operating largely in informal and micro-scale enterprises with limited growth potential. Studies further emphasize that without institutional support and collective mechanisms, women-led service enterprises struggle to achieve sustainability and formal recognition (Nippierd, 2019). This literature establishes the relevance of women entrepreneurship as the foundational element of the proposed model.

2.2 Cooperative Model as a Collective Entrepreneurship Framework: The cooperative model has been widely recognized as an effective mechanism for collective entrepreneurship, social inclusion, and economic resilience. According to Birchall (2011), cooperatives enable small producers and service providers to achieve economies of scale, improve bargaining power, and reduce individual risk through shared ownership and democratic governance. Develtere et al. (2008) emphasize that cooperatives provide a structured pathway for transitioning informal economic activities into formalized enterprises.

Literature on women-led cooperatives highlights their role in enhancing income security, leadership development, and social capital formation among women (Majurin, 2012; Nippierd, 2019). The cooperative structure is particularly suitable for women entrepreneurs in developing economies, as it facilitates access to finance, training, and markets that are otherwise inaccessible at the individual level. This body of literature supports the cooperative model as the independent variable in the proposed conceptual framework.

2.3 Cooperative Mechanisms (Mediating Variables): These cooperative mechanisms act as mediating variables linking the cooperative structure to service outcomes.

2.3.1 Shared Procurement and Cost Efficiency: Shared procurement is a key mechanism through which cooperatives enhance cost efficiency and stabilize supply chains. Birchall and Ketilson (2009) argue that collective purchasing strengthens bargaining power and reduces exposure to price volatility. In food-based enterprises, shared sourcing of raw materials improves affordability and quality consistency (FAO, 2015).

2.3.2 Standardization of Quality and Operations: Standardization of operational processes, hygiene, and service quality is essential for building trust and credibility in service delivery. Zeuli and Cropp (2004) emphasize that standardized practices enhance institutional reliability

in cooperative enterprises. In elderly care services, consistency in meal quality and nutrition is particularly critical due to the vulnerability of service recipients (WHO, 2015).

2.3.3 Joint Branding and Market Access: Joint branding allows small enterprises to gain visibility and legitimacy in competitive markets. Wanyama (2014) notes that cooperative branding reduces marketing costs while strengthening consumer recognition and trust. Community-based branding further enhances acceptance of women-led services.

2.3.4 Training and Capacity Building: Capacity building is central to cooperative success. According to the International Labour Organization (2016), training in financial literacy, governance, food safety, and technology significantly improves productivity and sustainability in women-led cooperatives. Skill development also facilitates compliance with regulatory frameworks.

2.4 Elderly Meal Services and Service Sustainability (Dependent Variable): Research on elderly care services emphasizes the growing importance of community-based and home-delivered meal services in promoting nutritional security, health outcomes, and independent living among the elderly (Walker & Maltby, 2012; WHO, 2015). Such services are particularly relevant in developing countries where institutional care facilities are limited and costly.

Studies indicate that elderly meal services contribute positively to nutritional intake, emotional well-being, and social inclusion (Gollub & Weddle, 2004). However, sustainability challenges such as inconsistent pricing, rising food costs, and operational inefficiencies remain significant, particularly for independent micro-enterprises (HelpAge International, 2018). The cooperative framework is therefore viewed as an effective mechanism for enhancing long-term service sustainability.

2.5 External Environmental Factors (Moderating Variables): The effectiveness of women-led cooperative models is influenced by external environmental conditions. Policy support for cooperatives and women entrepreneurship significantly enhances access to finance, training, and market opportunities (ILO, 2016). Economic conditions such as inflation and food price volatility moderate operational viability, while cooperative models have been found to be more resilient during economic fluctuations (Birchall, 2011).

Technological factors, including digital payment systems and service coordination tools, improve efficiency but require adequate digital literacy (World Bank, 2020). Legal and regulatory frameworks related to food safety, labor, and cooperative registration further moderate scalability and formalization (Develtere et al., 2008). Social and demographic

factors such as ageing populations and changing family structures also shape demand for elderly meal services.

2.6 Research Gap

Although extensive literature exists on women entrepreneurship, cooperative models, and elderly care services, these areas are largely examined independently. Limited scholarly attention has been given to strategically integrating women-led cooperative structures within elderly meal service delivery. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies applying strategic management frameworks to analyze such integrated models. This study addresses these gaps by proposing and strategically analyzing a women-led cooperative model for elderly meal services.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To propose a women-led cooperative model for providing sustainable meal services to the elderly.
2. To strategically analyze the proposed cooperative model using established strategic analysis tools.

4. Theoretical Foundation

The study is anchored in cooperative theory and human development theory. Cooperative theory emphasizes collective ownership, democratic governance, and mutual benefit as mechanisms for economic and social advancement. Human development theory, as articulated by Sen (1999), focuses on expanding individual capabilities, agency, and well-being rather than merely economic growth. By integrating these perspectives, the study conceptualizes women-led cooperatives not merely as economic entities but as instruments of human development that enhance women's agency, promote social inclusion, and improve the well-being of elderly beneficiaries (Mitra, 2014).

5. Conceptual Framework of the Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services

The conceptual framework positions the women-led cooperative model as the independent variable influencing the sustainability and effectiveness of elderly meal services. The relationship is mediated through shared procurement, standardised operations, joint branding, training and capacity building, and financial inclusion. These mediating mechanisms enhance operational efficiency, service quality, and financial stability. External contextual factors such

as policy support, economic conditions, technological access, and regulatory environment act as moderating variables that influence the strength of this relationship.

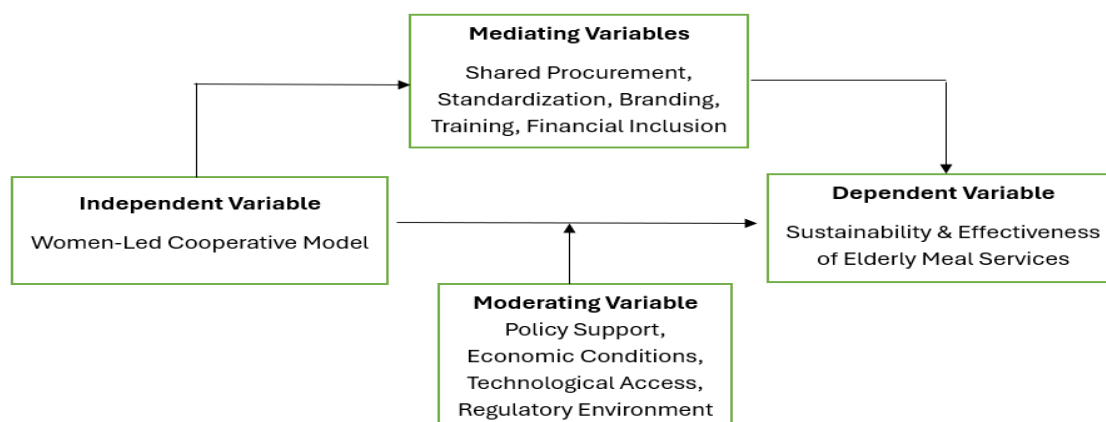


Figure 1. illustrates the Conceptual Framework of the Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services.

Source: the author

6. Proposed Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services

The proposed model translates the conceptual framework into an operational structure. At its core is a registered women-led micro-cooperative governed democratically on a one-member–one-vote principle. Individual women entrepreneurs continue to provide meal services while benefiting from collective organisation.

The cooperative facilitates shared procurement to reduce input costs and mitigate price volatility. Standardised operations ensure consistent quality, hygiene, and nutritional adequacy tailored to elderly needs. Joint branding and marketing enhance visibility, credibility, and market access. Training and capacity building improve members’ skills in food safety, financial management, and digital tools. Financial inclusion and institutional support enable access to credit, insurance, and government schemes.

7. Strategic Analysis of the Proposed Conceptual Model

To evaluate the feasibility, sustainability, and strategic robustness of the proposed Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services, a comprehensive strategic analysis is undertaken. Strategic analysis tools enable systematic examination of both the external environment and internal capabilities influencing organizational performance (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2017). In alignment with the conceptual framework of the study, this section employs PESTLE Analysis, SWOT Analysis, Michael Porter’s Five Forces Model,

and Value Chain Analysis to provide a multidimensional assessment of the proposed cooperative model.

7.1 PESTLE Analysis of the Proposed Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services

PESTLE analysis examines the macro-environmental factors that shape organizational strategy and operational sustainability (Aguilar, 1967). The proposed women-led cooperative model operates within a socio-economic environment influenced by political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors.

7.1.1 Political Factors: Government initiatives promoting women entrepreneurship, cooperatives, and social welfare programs for the elderly positively influence the feasibility of the proposed model. Policies supporting self-help groups, microfinance, and food security schemes enhance institutional legitimacy. However, inconsistencies in policy implementation and limited awareness at the grassroots level may restrict access to benefits.

7.1.2 Economic Factors: Rising food inflation, fluctuating raw material costs, and limited access to formal credit present economic challenges. Conversely, collective procurement, shared resources, and economies of scale inherent in cooperative structures help mitigate cost pressures and improve financial resilience (Birchall, 2011).

Social Factors: Demographic ageing, changing family structures, urban migration, and increasing nuclear households have created a growing demand for organized elderly meal services. Cultural acceptance of women as caregivers further strengthens the social legitimacy of women-led cooperatives. Trust-based relationships and community embeddedness enhance service acceptance.

7.1.3 Technological Factors: Digital payment systems, mobile-based order management, and basic logistics technologies improve service efficiency and transparency. However, limited digital literacy among women entrepreneurs may constrain technology adoption, necessitating targeted training interventions.

7.1.4 Legal Factors: Compliance with food safety regulations, cooperative registration norms, and labor laws is essential for formalization. While legal frameworks support cooperatives, procedural complexity and regulatory costs may discourage small enterprises from formal registration.

7.1.5 Environmental Factors: Growing awareness of sustainable food practices, waste reduction, and local sourcing aligns well with cooperative principles. Environmentally responsible procurement and packaging practices enhance social value creation.

7.2 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED WOMEN-LED COOPERATIVE MODEL FOR ELDERLY MEAL SERVICES

The SWOT framework is a strategic analysis tool that helps to assess the internal strengths and weaknesses of a proposed model, with the external opportunities and threats present in its operating environment (Hill, & Westbrook, 1997). The primary objective of applying SWOT analysis in this study is to assess the feasibility, sustainability, and strategic positioning of the proposed women-led cooperative model for elderly meal services. Through this analysis, internal cooperative strengths are aligned with external market factors to improve elderly care service delivery. A thorough examination of existing literature and the underlying principles of cooperative-based service models has resulted in the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

7.2.1 Strengths: The proposed women-led cooperative model for elderly meal services exhibits several inherent strengths:

1. The model is grounded in cooperative principles such as collective ownership, democratic governance, and mutual support, which enhance sustainability and shared responsibility among women entrepreneurs (D'Silva, & Bhat, 2021).
2. Women-led elderly meal services benefit from strong community trust and personalised service, particularly important in care-based services for the elderly.
3. Shared procurement under the cooperative framework reduces input costs and mitigates the impact of food price volatility.
4. Standardisation of food quality, hygiene, and nutrition improves service reliability and credibility among elderly beneficiaries and their families.
5. Joint branding and collective marketing increase visibility and market reach while reducing individual promotional costs.
6. The cooperative structure facilitates access to institutional finance, government schemes, and welfare programmes that are otherwise difficult for individual micro-entrepreneurs to access.
7. The model promotes women's economic empowerment, leadership development, and social inclusion, aligning with human development objectives.

7.2.2 Weaknesses: Despite its strengths, the proposed model has certain limitations:

1. Many women entrepreneurs involved in elderly meal services may lack formal managerial, financial, and digital skills, affecting initial operational efficiency (D'Silva, & Ganesha, 2023).

2. Coordinating multiple members within a cooperative may lead to challenges in decision-making and conflict management, particularly during the early stages.
3. Dependence on local markets and community-based demand may limit rapid scalability beyond specific geographic regions.
4. Compliance with cooperative registration and regulatory norms may increase administrative responsibilities for members.
5. Initial resistance to collectivisation may arise among women accustomed to operating independently.

7.2.3 Opportunities: The external environment presents several opportunities for the proposed cooperative model:

1. The rapidly growing elderly population and changing family structures have increased demand for reliable home-based meal services.
2. Government policies promoting women entrepreneurship, cooperatives, and elderly welfare create a supportive institutional environment.
3. Rising awareness of nutrition and health among the elderly enhances demand for specialised meal services.
4. Digital platforms and mobile-based applications provide opportunities for efficient order management, payments, and service coordination (D'Silva, & Bhat, 2021).
5. Partnerships with hospitals, NGOs, senior citizen associations, and local governments can expand service reach and stability.
6. The model has potential for replication across urban and semi-urban regions with similar demographic and social conditions.

7.2.4 Threats: The proposed women-led cooperative model may face the following external threats:

1. Rising food inflation and fluctuating input costs can affect pricing and profitability if not effectively managed.
2. Competition from commercial catering services, food delivery platforms, and informal local providers may limit market share.
3. Inconsistent policy support or delays in accessing government benefits may reduce institutional advantages.
4. Technological barriers such as low digital literacy among members may hinder adoption of digital tools.
5. External shocks such as pandemics, supply chain disruptions, or economic downturns may adversely affect service continuity.

7.3 Michael Porter's Five Forces Analysis of the Proposed Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services

Michael Porter's Five Forces Analysis is used to critically evaluate the strategic positioning and long-term sustainability of the proposed Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services. A business model represents a structured framework through which value is created, delivered, and sustained while achieving social and economic objectives (Porter, & Strategy, (1980). In the context of social enterprises and cooperative models, the twin challenges lie in ensuring service effectiveness while maintaining financial and operational sustainability. To address these challenges, Michael Porter's Five Forces Model is employed to analyze the competitive environment influencing the proposed conceptual framework. This model identifies five interacting forces—threat of new entrants, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers, threat of substitutes, and competitive rivalry—which collectively determine the viability and robustness of the proposed model.

7.3.1 Threat of New Entrants: The threat of new entrants in elderly meal services is moderate. While entry barriers in small-scale food services are relatively low, the proposed women-led cooperative model benefits from collective ownership, community trust, and local embeddedness. New private players may face challenges in building credibility among elderly beneficiaries, especially in culturally sensitive contexts where trust, reliability, and continuity of care are critical. Additionally, regulatory requirements related to food safety, hygiene standards, and licensing may act as partial barriers. The cooperative structure, supported by policy incentives and local government schemes, further reduces the attractiveness of entry for purely profit-oriented competitors.

7.3.2 Bargaining Power of Buyers: The bargaining power of buyers—primarily elderly beneficiaries and their families—is moderate to high. Elderly consumers are price-sensitive and quality-conscious, particularly regarding nutritional value, hygiene, and timely delivery. However, switching costs remain relatively low, as alternative meal providers or household arrangements may be available. The cooperative model mitigates buyer power by offering affordable pricing, culturally appropriate meals, and consistent service quality through standardization and training. Emotional attachment, community involvement, and social impact further enhance customer loyalty and reduce buyer pressure.

7.3.3 Bargaining Power of Suppliers: The bargaining power of suppliers in this model is low to moderate. Raw materials such as vegetables, grains, and groceries are generally sourced from local markets, self-help groups, or small farmers, reducing dependency on a single supplier. Shared procurement within the cooperative allows bulk purchasing, cost

control, and better negotiation power. Moreover, the availability of multiple local suppliers weakens individual supplier influence. Long-term relationships with suppliers and collective bargaining further strengthen the cooperative's position and reduce supply-side risks.

7.3.4 Threat of Substitute Products or Services: The threat of substitutes is moderate. Substitutes include home-cooked meals prepared by family members, private catering services, NGOs, religious organizations, or government-run feeding programs. However, these alternatives may lack consistency, personalization, or long-term sustainability. The proposed cooperative model differentiates itself by offering regular, nutritionally balanced meals, doorstep delivery, and social care elements tailored specifically for the elderly. Low switching costs exist, but emotional trust, reliability, and community engagement reduce the likelihood of frequent substitution.

7.3.5 Competitive Rivalry: Competitive rivalry within elderly meal services is moderate. The sector is largely fragmented, consisting of small local providers, NGOs, and informal operators. Price competition exists, but differentiation based on service quality, nutritional standards, and social impact plays a more significant role. The proposed women-led cooperative model experiences limited direct rivalry due to its localized operations and cooperative nature. Collaboration rather than competition is common in the social service sector, and the model's focus on empowerment, inclusion, and sustainability reduces intense competitive pressure.

7.4 Value Chain Analysis of the Proposed Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services

Value Chain Analysis is employed to examine how value is created and delivered through a sequence of activities within an organization (Porter, 1985). A value chain represents the full range of activities required to bring a product or service from conception to final delivery and post-service support. In the context of social enterprises and cooperative models, value creation extends beyond economic gains to include social inclusion, empowerment, and community well-being. Therefore, Value Chain Analysis is particularly relevant for evaluating the proposed Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services, as it highlights how collective action enhances both operational efficiency and social impact. The value chain of the proposed cooperative model is divided into primary activities and support activities, each contributing to sustainability and effectiveness of elderly meal services.

7.4.1 Primary Activities: Primary activities include Inbound Logistics, Operations, Outbound Logistics, Marketing and Sales, Service.

- **Inbound Logistics:** Inbound logistics involve sourcing raw materials such as grains, vegetables, groceries, and cooking inputs. Under the cooperative model, shared procurement mechanisms allow members to purchase inputs in bulk from local suppliers, self-help groups, and farmers. This collective sourcing reduces input costs, minimizes supply disruptions, and improves quality consistency. Local sourcing also strengthens community linkages and reduces transportation costs.
 - **Operations:** Operations include meal planning, preparation, cooking, and quality control. Standardized recipes, nutrition guidelines, and hygiene protocols are introduced through cooperative-level training. This ensures uniform service quality while allowing flexibility for cultural and dietary preferences of the elderly. Shared kitchens or coordinated home-based production further improve efficiency and compliance with food safety standards.
 - **Outbound Logistics:** Outbound logistics consist of packaging, distribution, and doorstep delivery of meals to elderly beneficiaries. The cooperative model enables route optimization, shared delivery resources, and scheduling efficiencies. Reliable and timely delivery enhances trust and service satisfaction among elderly consumers and their families.
 - **Marketing and Sales:** Marketing activities focus on community-based promotion, joint branding, and relationship-building rather than aggressive commercial advertising. Cooperative branding enhances credibility and visibility, while word-of-mouth referrals and partnerships with local institutions, NGOs, and healthcare providers strengthen market outreach. Affordable pricing strategies ensure accessibility without compromising service viability.
 - **Service:** Service activities include customer feedback, grievance redressal, dietary customization, and continuity of care. The personalized nature of women-led services fosters emotional trust and long-term relationships with elderly beneficiaries. Cooperative-level monitoring mechanisms improve accountability and service responsiveness.
- Support Activities:** Support activities include Human Resource Management, Technology Development, Firm Infrastructure, Procurement Support.
- **Human Resource Management:** Training and capacity-building are central support activities. Members receive skill development in food safety, nutrition, financial literacy, digital tools, and cooperative governance. This strengthens women's entrepreneurial capabilities and improves operational professionalism.
 - **Technology Development:** Basic digital tools such as mobile-based order management, digital payments, and communication platforms support transparency and efficiency.

Technology adoption enhances record-keeping, coordination, and customer engagement, though continuous training is required to address digital literacy gaps.

- **Firm Infrastructure (Governance & Finance):** The cooperative structure provides democratic governance, shared decision-making, and financial inclusion. Collective access to credit, subsidies, and insurance improves financial stability. Transparent accounting and cooperative regulations strengthen institutional sustainability.
- **Procurement Support:** Centralized procurement policies and negotiated supplier contracts reduce cost volatility and improve bargaining power. Long-term supplier relationships further enhance supply reliability.

7.5 Implications of the Study: The findings of this conceptual and strategic analysis offer significant implications across theoretical, policy, managerial, and social dimensions. By integrating cooperative theory, women entrepreneurship, and strategic management frameworks, the study contributes to both academic literature and practical application in elderly care services.

7.5.1 Strategic Implications: The integrated strategic analysis demonstrates that the proposed Women-Led Cooperative Model for Elderly Meal Services operates within a favorable yet challenging strategic environment. External opportunities arising from demographic trends and policy support, combined with internal strengths such as community trust and cooperative governance, enhance sustainability. Strategic tools collectively validate the conceptual framework and justify the cooperative model as an effective mechanism for women's economic empowerment and improved elderly care delivery.

7.5.2 Theoretical Implications: This study extends existing literature on women entrepreneurship and cooperative models by positioning elderly meal services as a viable domain for women-led micro-cooperatives. By developing and analysing a structured conceptual framework, the study demonstrates how cooperative mechanisms act as mediating factors that translate collective action into service sustainability and effectiveness. The integration of strategic tools such as PESTLE, SWOT, Porter's Five Forces, and Value Chain Analysis strengthens the theoretical grounding of cooperative-based social enterprises. The study also contributes to human development theory by illustrating how cooperatives function as institutional mechanisms that simultaneously promote economic empowerment and social welfare.

7.5.3 Policy Implications: The proposed women-led cooperative model highlights the need for targeted policy interventions supporting informal women entrepreneurs engaged in elderly

care services. Policymakers can utilize the findings to design sector-specific cooperative schemes, simplify registration processes, and provide dedicated training, financial assistance, and technological support. The study underscores the importance of aligning women entrepreneurship policies with ageing and social welfare policies to ensure integrated service delivery. Government agencies, local bodies, and cooperative departments can leverage this model to strengthen community-based elderly care systems.

7.5.4 Managerial and Practical Implications: From a managerial perspective, the study provides a strategic roadmap for women entrepreneurs transitioning from informal operations to structured cooperative models. The strategic analysis demonstrates how shared procurement, standardization, joint branding, and collective training enhance operational efficiency and reduce business risks. NGOs, self-help groups, and development agencies can adopt the proposed framework as a replicable model for organizing women-led service enterprises. The value chain perspective further assists practitioners in identifying critical activities where cooperative integration generates maximum value.

7.5.5 Social and Developmental Implications: The study reinforces the role of women-led cooperatives as instruments of inclusive development. By formalizing elderly meal services through cooperative structures, the model improves service quality, accessibility, and reliability for elderly beneficiaries. Simultaneously, it enhances women's income security, leadership opportunities, and social recognition. The cooperative framework fosters community participation, social cohesion, and intergenerational care, thereby contributing to broader human development outcomes.

7.5.6 Implications for Future Research: As a conceptual study, this research lays the foundation for empirical investigation. Future studies may empirically test the proposed framework using quantitative or mixed-method approaches to examine the strength of relationships among variables. Comparative studies across regions, service types, or cooperative structures could further validate the model's scalability and adaptability. Longitudinal research may also assess the long-term impact of cooperative participation on women's empowerment and elderly well-being.

8. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that a women-led cooperative framework offers a viable and sustainable solution for elderly meal services. By integrating cooperative principles with strategic analysis, the proposed model addresses both social and economic objectives. The model contributes to women's economic empowerment, enhances elderly well-being, and

advances human development through cooperatives. Future research may empirically test the model across different regional contexts.

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