
Pemberdayaan Perempuan di Tingkat Akar Rumput: Peran Sekolah Perempuan sebagai Ruang Belajar Berbasis Komunitas

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Abstrak

Pemberdayaan perempuan di tingkat akar rumput merupakan bagian penting dari upaya mewujudkan kesetaraan gender dan keadilan sosial dalam pembangunan masyarakat. Namun, perempuan sering menghadapi berbagai hambatan struktural dan kultural yang membatasi akses mereka terhadap pendidikan, informasi, serta ruang pengambilan keputusan di tingkat komunitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran Sekolah Perempuan sebagai ruang belajar berbasis komunitas dalam mendukung proses pemberdayaan perempuan di tingkat akar rumput. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode kajian literatur (*literature review*) terhadap berbagai sumber ilmiah seperti artikel jurnal, buku akademik, dan laporan penelitian yang relevan dengan tema pemberdayaan perempuan dan pendidikan berbasis komunitas. Proses analisis dilakukan melalui identifikasi literatur yang relevan, analisis konsep dan temuan penelitian sebelumnya, serta sintesis berbagai perspektif mengenai pemberdayaan perempuan dan pendidikan komunitas. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa Sekolah Perempuan berperan sebagai ruang pembelajaran kolektif yang mampu meningkatkan kapasitas pengetahuan perempuan, membangun kesadaran kritis mengenai kesetaraan gender, serta memperkuat solidaritas dan jaringan sosial antarperempuan di tingkat komunitas. Selain itu, ruang belajar berbasis komunitas ini juga mendorong meningkatnya partisipasi perempuan dalam berbagai kegiatan sosial dan pembangunan lokal. Dengan demikian, Sekolah Perempuan dapat dipahami sebagai salah satu strategi pemberdayaan perempuan yang efektif dalam memperkuat posisi perempuan di masyarakat serta mendorong pembangunan yang lebih inklusif dan berkeadilan gender.

Abstract

Women's empowerment at the grassroots level is an important aspect of achieving gender equality and social justice in community development. However, women often face structural and cultural barriers that limit their access to education, information, and decision-making spaces within their communities. This study aims to examine the role of the Women's School (Sekolah Perempuan) as a community-based learning space in supporting the process of women's empowerment at the grassroots level. This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method by examining various academic sources such as journal articles, scholarly books, and research reports related to women's empowerment and community-based education. The analysis was conducted through identifying relevant literature, reviewing theoretical concepts and previous research findings, and synthesizing perspectives on women's empowerment and community learning practices. The results indicate that the Women's School functions as a collective learning space that enhances women's knowledge capacity, strengthens critical awareness of gender equality, and builds social solidarity and networks among women at the community level. Furthermore, community-based learning initiatives such as the Women's School contribute to increasing women's participation in social activities and local development processes. Therefore, the Women's School can be understood as an effective strategy for strengthening women's positions in society and promoting more inclusive and gender-equitable development.



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1. Introduction

Efforts to realize gender equality and social justice remain an important agenda in community development in various countries. Women often face various forms of inequality in access to education, information, and decision-making spaces at both the family and community levels. These inequalities are not only influenced by economic factors, but also by social and cultural norms that limit women's mobility in public life. Therefore, various approaches to women's empowerment continue to be developed to strengthen women's capacity, independence, and participation in social development.

The concept of women's empowerment basically refers to the process of increasing the ability of individuals or groups to gain control over resources, decision-making, and determining the direction of their own lives. According to Naila Kabeer, women's empowerment is a process in which women who previously experienced limited choices gain the ability to make strategic choices in their lives. In line with this, Amartya Sen (1999) explains that equitable development must provide equal opportunities for every individual to develop their capacities and freedoms in determining their lives. In this context, women's empowerment becomes an important part of efforts to expand women's freedoms and capabilities in social life.

In practice, women's empowerment is not only carried out through formal policies, but also through various initiatives that develop at the community level. Community-based approaches are considered effective because they are able to reach women directly in their daily lives. Robert Chambers emphasizes that people-centered development processes need to involve the active participation of the community in order to create sustainable social change. This approach opens space for women to be involved in learning processes, sharing experiences, and building critical awareness regarding their position in society.

One form of empowerment approach that has developed in various communities is the establishment of community-based learning spaces. These learning spaces serve as a place for women to gain knowledge, improve their personal capacity, and strengthen social solidarity. According to Paulo Freire, dialogical and participatory education processes can help individuals understand the social realities they face and encourage the emergence of critical awareness to create change. In the context of women's empowerment, community-based learning spaces function not only as places to gain knowledge, but also as spaces to build gender awareness, strengthen self-confidence, and increase women's participation in social life.

One initiative of community education that has developed in efforts to empower women is Sekolah Perempuan (Women's School). Sekolah Perempuan is a non-formal learning space designed to strengthen the capacity of grassroots women through participatory learning processes, discussions, and strengthening women's leadership. Through these learning activities, women are encouraged to understand their rights, recognize the social issues they face, and build the courage to be involved in decision-making processes at the community level.

Various studies show that community-based women's learning spaces can contribute to increasing gender awareness, strengthening solidarity among women, and encouraging women's participation in social development. However, academic studies that comprehensively examine the role of Sekolah Perempuan as a community-based learning space in the process of women's empowerment still need to be further developed. Therefore, this study aims to examine various literature related to women's empowerment at the grassroots level and to analyze the role of Sekolah Perempuan as a community-based learning space in supporting the empowerment process. Through this literature review, it is expected that a more systematic understanding can be obtained regarding the contribution of community learning spaces in strengthening women's capacity and participation in social life.



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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's Participation and Empowerment in Development

Women's empowerment is one of the important approaches in development oriented toward social justice and gender equality. The concept of empowerment basically refers to the process of increasing the ability of individuals or groups to gain control over resources, improve their capacity in decision-making, and determine the direction of their lives independently. According to Kabeer (1999), women's empowerment can be understood through three main dimensions, namely resources (access to resources), agency (the ability to act and make decisions), and achievements (the results or changes achieved). These three dimensions indicate that empowerment is not only related to increasing individual capacity, but also to changes in social structures that enable women to gain more equal space in social life.

From a development perspective, Amartya Sen (1999) emphasizes that equitable development must provide equal opportunities for every individual to develop their capacities and freedoms. The concept of the capability approach proposed by Sen places individual freedom as a central element in development. In this context, women's empowerment becomes an important part of efforts to expand women's freedom in accessing education, information, and spaces for participation in social and political life.

However, in many societies women still face various structural barriers that limit their participation in public spaces. Patriarchal cultural norms often place women in domestic roles, making their access to education, information, and decision-making limited. Therefore, women's empowerment requires approaches that are not only based on formal policies, but also through social processes that are able to increase critical awareness and women's capacity at the community level.

Community-Based Education as a Strategy for Women's Empowerment

One approach widely used in the process of women's empowerment is community-based education. This approach places the community as the main actor in the process of learning and social change. Chambers (1997) emphasizes that people-centered development must involve the active participation of the community in order to create sustainable social change. Through this approach, the community does not only become the object of development, but also becomes the subject involved in processes of learning, reflection, and decision-making.

In the context of community education, Paulo Freire (1970) explains that the educational process should be dialogical and participatory. Education does not only function as a process of transferring knowledge, but also as a means to build critical consciousness. Through dialogue and reflection on life experiences, individuals can understand the social realities they face and develop the ability to create change.

The community-based education approach becomes highly relevant in women's empowerment at the grassroots level. Women who have had limited access to formal education can gain learning opportunities through community learning spaces. In these spaces, women can share experiences, expand their knowledge, and build social solidarity with other women.

Sekolah Perempuan as a Community-Based Learning Space

One form of community education that has developed in efforts to empower women is Sekolah Perempuan. Sekolah Perempuan is a non-formal learning space designed to strengthen women's capacity through participatory learning processes, collective discussions, and strengthening women's leadership at the community level.



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According to Rowlands (1997), women's empowerment is not only related to increasing individual capacity, but also to strengthening the collective power of women in society. Learning spaces such as Sekolah Perempuan allow women to build shared awareness regarding various social issues they face and develop collective strategies to address these issues.

In addition, Batliwala (2007) emphasizes that the process of women's empowerment must be able to build critical awareness of power structures that influence women's lives. In this context, Sekolah Perempuan does not only function as a learning space, but also as a social space that enables women to understand gender relations in society and strengthen their position in social life.

Thus, Sekolah Perempuan can be understood as one of the strategies for women's empowerment that integrates the process of community education, strengthening social solidarity, and increasing women's participation in social life.

3. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method by examining various written sources, such as scientific journal articles, academic books, research reports, and other scientific publications relevant to the research topic. The literature used was obtained through searches in various academic databases such as Google Scholar, national journals, and international journals. The literature search process was conducted using keywords such as women empowerment, grassroots women, community-based learning, women's education, and women's community empowerment. The criteria for literature used in this study include publications that are related to the themes of women's empowerment, community-based education, and women's learning spaces in the context of social development. The selected literature consists of scientific publications that are relevant and support the analysis of the concept of women's empowerment and the practice of community education in various social contexts.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach through several stages. The first stage was identifying and classifying various literature relevant to the research topic. The second stage involved analyzing concepts, approaches, and findings from previous studies related to women's empowerment at the grassroots level as well as community-based learning spaces. The third stage was synthesizing these various findings to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of community-based learning spaces in supporting the women's empowerment process. Through this literature review method, the study is expected to provide a systematic overview of the concept of women's empowerment and the contribution of community-based learning spaces, particularly Sekolah Perempuan (Women's School), in strengthening women's capacity, critical awareness, and participation in social life. The results of this study are also expected to serve as a reference in developing more inclusive women's empowerment strategies at the community level.

4. Discussion

The results of the literature review show that community-based learning spaces have an important role in the process of women's empowerment at the grassroots level. Community learning programs such as Sekolah Perempuan do not only function as a means of non-formal education, but also as social spaces that enable women to increase their capacity, build collective solidarity, and strengthen their participation in social life.

Sekolah Perempuan as a Collective Learning Space



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Sekolah Perempuan is one form of community education designed to improve women's capacity through participatory learning approaches. In this learning space, women do not only receive learning materials, but are also involved in dialogue and reflection on life experiences. The dialogical learning process enables women to understand various social issues they face and develop critical awareness regarding their position in society.

This collective learning approach is in line with the concept of critical education proposed by Freire (1970), which emphasizes that the learning process should encourage individuals to understand social realities and develop the ability to create change. In the context of Sekolah Perempuan, the learning process does not only focus on increasing knowledge, but also on building critical awareness regarding gender equality issues and women's rights.

Increasing Women's Capacity and Critical Awareness

The literature review shows that increasing knowledge capacity is an important step in the process of women's empowerment. Through participatory learning activities, women gain knowledge about various issues related to social life, such as gender equality, family health, social protection, and participation in community development.

This increase in knowledge contributes to the formation of women's critical awareness regarding their rights as members of society. When women have a better understanding of their rights and position in society, they tend to be more confident in expressing their opinions and participating in various social activities.

Strengthening Solidarity and Social Networks

In addition to increasing individual capacity, Sekolah Perempuan also functions as a collective space that strengthens solidarity among women. In community learning spaces, women have the opportunity to share experiences and build supportive social networks. This solidarity becomes important because women often face various structural barriers that limit their participation in social life.

Rowlands (1997) explains that women's empowerment is not only related to individual change, but also to strengthening the collective power of women in society. Through community solidarity, women can build social support that strengthens their courage to participate in public spaces.

Increasing Women's Participation in Local Development

The results of the literature review also show that community learning spaces can encourage increased participation of women in various local development activities. Women who gain access to knowledge and learning spaces tend to be more active in community activities and more confident in expressing their aspirations in various social forums.

This increase in women's participation shows that women's empowerment not only impacts individual change, but also contributes to social change at the community level. With increased capacity and awareness among women, community development can become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of various groups in society.

Sekolah Perempuan as a Sustainable Empowerment Strategy

Overall, the results of the literature review show that Sekolah Perempuan has great potential as a strategy for women's empowerment at the grassroots level. Through participatory learning processes, women gain space to increase their capacity, build critical awareness, and strengthen social solidarity.

In the long term, the existence of Sekolah Perempuan can contribute to encouraging more inclusive and gender-just social change. With increased capacity and participation of women,

development at the community level is expected to become more responsive to the needs of society and provide wider space for women to play roles in social life and local development.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature review on women's empowerment at the grassroots level, it can be concluded that Sekolah Perempuan has an important role as a community-based learning space in supporting the process of women's empowerment. Through participatory and dialogical learning approaches, Sekolah Perempuan provides opportunities for women to increase their knowledge, build critical awareness, and strengthen their capacity in dealing with various social issues they face in their daily lives.

The results of the review show that the existence of Sekolah Perempuan does not only function as a means of non-formal education, but also as a social space that allows women to share experiences, build solidarity, and strengthen social networks at the community level. The collective learning process encourages women to better understand their rights and increases their confidence to participate in various social activities in society.

In addition, various literature also shows that community-based learning spaces can encourage increased women's participation in local development. Women who gain access to knowledge and learning spaces tend to be more active in community activities and more confident in expressing the aspirations and needs of society. Thus, Sekolah Perempuan can be understood as one of the effective empowerment strategies in strengthening women's position in social life and encouraging development that is more inclusive and responsive to community needs.

Overall, Sekolah Perempuan as a community-based learning space provides an important contribution to the process of women's empowerment at the grassroots level through increasing knowledge capacity, strengthening social solidarity, and increasing women's participation in social life and community development.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the literature review in this study, several recommendations can be proposed as follows.

1. The development of community-based women's empowerment programs such as Sekolah Perempuan needs to continue to be strengthened as one of the strategies to increase women's capacity and participation at the grassroots level. This program can serve as an effective means to increase gender awareness, women's leadership, and women's involvement in various social development processes.
2. The government and various institutions engaged in community empowerment are expected to provide greater support for the development of community-based women's learning spaces. This support may include the provision of learning facilities, strengthening the capacity of facilitators, and integrating women's empowerment programs into local development policies.
3. Civil society organizations and local communities need to continue encouraging the creation of inclusive learning spaces for women so that they have broader opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities in social life.



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4. Future research is expected to examine more deeply the practices and concrete impacts of Sekolah Perempuan in various community contexts, particularly through field research approaches. Such studies are expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the contribution of community-based learning spaces in the process of women's empowerment and the development of a more gender-just society.

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