


Empowering Women in Ketapang Village: The Role of Students as Agent of Change

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A B S T R A C T

Ketapang Village faces issues of gender inequality, such as women's low income, limited understanding of women's roles, and lack of awareness about education and mental health. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach involving students, village government, women's empowerment participants, and community leaders. The study found that students play a key role as agents of change, social control, iron stock, and moral force in implementing women's empowerment through strategies such as dismantling role myths, skills training, and providing educational opportunities. Supporting factors include community and government support, relationship between students and participants, and external cooperation while inhibiting factors include time and locations constraints. This research offers knowledge on how to improve gender equality through women's empowerment.

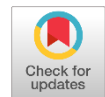
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INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is still a hot issue to discuss because it is related to gender inequality, which occurs due to the patriarchal culture that is still maintained by society. Women's empowerment globally has become and remains an ongoing issue (Kempster et al., 2023). Gender inequality globally has begun to decrease, but in developing countries progress is a little slow due to a strong patriarchal culture (Aman et al., 2022). Developing countries have a variety of complex and interrelated social problems from region to region (Almeida & Morais, 2024). Women's empowerment is a new issue for developing countries and the emphasis is on promoting gender equality, empowering women and girls (Das & Firdaush, 2022). Women's empowerment is a process of increasing awareness and capacity to achieve equality with men in participation, decision-making, and social control (Rosramadhana et al., 2022). Women's empowerment is expressed as the capacity of women to manage their daily activities in a socio-economic and political context without any interference (M. Gupta, 2020).

Women's empowerment plays an important role in solving gender inequality, such as health problems, educational inequality, discrimination, crime, and violence (Sertyesilisik, 2023). The implementation of women's empowerment will help women towards equality and stability for nation building in all fields of life. Women's empowerment is not made to create women who are superior to men, but it is an effort to fulfill women's rights. Empowering women from indigenous and grassroots communities is possible with skills that make women financially independent and reduce vulnerability and gender inequality (Gressel et al., 2020). Women's empowerment also involves decision-making, freedom of

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choice, resistance and perception of physical and verbal violence in society (Chari & Gangaidzo, 2024). Education is key to women's empowerment for women to face challenges, change traditional roles, and improve status in the family, community, and political-economic system (Jaysawal & Saha, 2023).

Women often experience discrimination and limited access, posing a serious challenge to community development. Women are not only disempowered due to ignorance of their rights, but also due to discriminatory economic, social, and cultural practices that foster inequality in communities and society at large (Choudhry et al., 2019). As the number of cases of abuse, domestic violence, and divorce increases, it is necessary to increase women's empowerment so that women have strength, ability, and independence (S. Gupta et al., 2024). Women's empowerment is essential for socioeconomic development (Niharika & Singh, 2020). Empowering women through increased access to education, women can improve socio-economic conditions, and increase knowledge about health (Putra et al., 2021). Women's empowerment is not only related to gender issues but an important component of sustainable development. Women's respect for themselves is influenced by empowerment so that they are able to fight for themselves, their position in society and the business environment (Vukovic et al., 2023).

In accordance with the agenda of the United Nations Commission promoting gender equality through women's empowerment, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set the fifth goal on gender equality. Indonesia adapts development programs hierarchically from the lowest village level to sub-district, district, provincial, and central levels to accelerate and harmonize national development (Susilowati & Mafruhah, 2023). Encouraging women's empowerment is an effort to achieve development goals (Machio et al., 2024). Efforts to achieve inclusive growth, poverty alleviation and sustainable development can be done through women's empowerment (Skaf et al., 2024). Rural women need to be given knowledge about gender equality on the grounds that the struggle for equal rights has been around for a long time (Arbarini et al., 2023).

Efforts to improve the quality of life of the community are through empowerment programs. The empowerment program is an effort to improve and improve one's status and role in the involvement of nation building (Afifah & Ilyas, 2021). Women have equally important responsibilities for family stability and national progress (Arshad, 2023). How to improve women's bargaining position in increasing their role in national development can be through empowerment (Haryani & Desmawati, 2021). The concept of empowerment in community development is related to the concepts of independence, participation, networking, and justice (Mulyono et al., 2020). Strategies to create people-centered development by improving the economy, social, culture can be through community empowerment and participation (Mulyono, 2020). In the implementation of women's empowerment, it is necessary to pay attention and make strategies to achieve the set goals. Education and training can help implement empowerment by providing practical skills and understanding how to apply them (Mulyono et al., 2023). According to Zakiyah, 2010 in (Rosramadhana et al., 2022) women's empowerment strategies can be carried out if they meet criteria such as being able to dismantle the myth of women who are only complementary in the household, provide various skills for women, and provide opportunities for women to be able to follow or pursue education as widely as possible.

The implementation of development in a country is an effort to advance the welfare of society (Hasdiani et al., 2022). One of the keys to sustainable development is human-centered development (Fatihin et al., 2021). Developing countries need village development which is a strategic factor to provide full autonomy in managing and improving community welfare (Sucipto & Fatihin, 2024). Indonesia is part of a developing country characterized by a high population growth rate, high poverty, and incomplete education. The government has the task of solving these problems, so government efforts need the participation of the community in order to get success (Faiqoh & Desmawati, 2021). The government, private sector, and society have responsibilities in the development process (Nadzifah, 2020).

Students as an important part of society must participate in nation building, efforts that can be made are the implementation of women's empowerment because women are still often left behind in various elements of life. As an educated person, students have a complex and comprehensive role (Kriswanto et al., 2021). Students have four important roles, namely being agents of change, social control, iron stock, and moral force (Edowai, 2022). Universitas Negeri Semarang students who are members of the PPK ORMAWA Guidance and Counseling Student Association carry out women's empowerment in Ketapang Village.

Ketapang Village is located in Susukan Sub-district, Semarang Regency. Ketapang Village has a total of 1,717 women of productive age (15-64 years old), 380 of whom are involved in economic activities, while 1,238 women of productive age are not involved in economic activities. Ketapang Village has various problems of gender inequality, for example the majority of women in the village work as self-employed, day laborers, farmers, or do not work, causing the economy to be relatively middle to lower class. The low understanding of women's roles causes problems in marriage, the lack of women's awareness of the importance of higher education as evidenced by the total productive only 99 women who pursue higher education, the lack of understanding and awareness of women about the importance ODGJ is 21 people, and strategic planning and managerial in the community is still lacking in utilizing technology.

Students have a strategic role in development activities through women's empowerment, such as initiating, designing, and implementing women's empowerment programs in Ketapang Village. In addition, students while implementing women's empowerment also analyze village government policies, provide trainings, and are active in voicing gender equality in the community. Women's empowerment in Ketapang Village consist of forty participants, all of whom are women. The involvement of students in women's empowerment is not optimal. Based on this background, it is necessary to identify the role of students, strategies for empowering women, and supporting and inhibiting factors in empowering women in Ketapang Village.

METHOD

Research Design

This research design uses a qualitative descriptive approach to describe the problems and research focus. The phenomenon in this study is the role of students in empowering women in Ketapang Village, (1) the role of students can be explained as agents of change, social control, iron stock, and moral force, (2) women's empowerment strategies can be explained from the stages of dismantling the myth of women's roles, providing various skills for women, providing opportunities for women to access education (3) supporting factors and inhibiting factors for empowerment can be explained through a description of the supporters and inhibitors of the women's empowerment process. There were forty women empowerment participants in Ketapang Village, each of whom graduated from elementary school, junior high school, high school, and undergraduate degree. Participants were taken based on recommendations from the Ketapang Village government, which was felt to still need a women's empowerment program to create strong and equal women. Participants also came from several hamlets, so that all hamlets in Ketapang Village could feel the impact as a whole.

(Alifa et al., 2023) used a qualitative research method of literature study type to show that students can play a role in the development and empowerment of village communities through KKN activities. Data is collected through library data collection, reading and recording, and processing research materials. (Prasa et al., 2024) used the participatory action research (PAR) research method to assess the role of SKTIP Muhammadiyah Kuningan KKN students in empowering the Longkewang Village community through the initiative of establishing a Learning House. Data were collected through community involvement, observation of children, formulating problems, finding solutions to problems, implementing

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Rumah Belajar, and the last stage of observation, evaluation, and reflection to measure the progress of the program. (Khairunisa et al., 2023) used a qualitative approach using the literature study method to find the Sekoper Cinta program on family welfare based on a community citizenship perspective. Data was collected through journals, articles, and data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS).

Data Collection Technique

This research was conducted in Ketapang Village, Susukan Subdistrict, Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. Research data collection was obtained through in-depth interviews to explore data and information from research subjects, namely about the role of students as agents of change, students as social control, students as iron stock, and students as moral force, women's empowerment strategies, and supporting factors and inhibiting factors in the implementation of women's empowerment. Primary data sources were obtained through participatory observation and semi-structured interviews. The sampling technique was carried out through purposive sampling, where the research subjects and informants were taken based on the research objectives. So the research subjects and informations for this study were obtained, consisting of 1) two PPK ORMAWA HIMA BK UNNES students 2) two Ketapang Village women's empowerment participants 3) two Ketapang Village government 4) two Ketapang Village community leaders. Secondary data sources were obtained through documentation of Ketapang Village women's empowerment activities, proposals and reports on the results of Ketapang Village women's empowerment activities, articles on the results of previous research, articles related to the role of students in women's empowerment, and books on the role of students and women's empowerment. This research tests validity by triangulating methods and data sources.

Data Analysis Technique

Qualitative data collection aims to analyze social events to get a picture of the process, analyze data, events, and information from social processes (Bungin, 2017). According to (Miles & Huberman, 2014) data analysis consists of four streams of activities, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data conclusions. The data analysis of this research began with data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation, the data was sorted to make the preparation of research results easier. After that, analyzing related data and reporting it in detail. The research data is presented in a systematic arrangement of information so that conclusions can be drawn, the phenomenon can be understood, and further analysis is carried out. Data conclusions contain answers to the formulation of problems that have been formulated from the start.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Ketapang Village is located in Susukan Sub-district, Semarang Regency, Central Java Province with an area of 316 hectares and a population of 5,140 people consisting of 2,590 men and 2,550 women with 1,628 family heads. Ketapang Village has 6 RT and 31 RW and consists of five hamlets, namely Ketapang Hamlet, Kwangsan Hamlet, Baran Hamlet, Sarimulyo Hamlet, and Karangasem Hamlet. The total population based on working age in 2024 is only 2,971 people.

Table 1. Population Data Based on Working Age

Labor Force	Male	Female	Total
Age Labor Force (15-65 years)	1.8716	1.155	2.971
Non Labor Age	774	1.395	2.169

Ketapang Village has a female population with no/no schooling totaling 707, not yet graduated from elementary school/equivalent totaling 154, graduated from elementary

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school/equivalent totaling 716, graduated from junior high school/equivalent totaling 466, graduated from high school/equivalent totaling 380, graduated from Diploma I/III totaling 4, graduated from Academy/Diploma III/S. Based on educational background, women in Ketapang Village are dominated by junior high school graduates. This data shows that there is still a low number of women who have access to higher education. Higher education institutions in Indonesia have challenges in implementing equal opportunities for men and women (Nikmatullah et al., 2024). The concepts of gender equality and social inclusion have not been fully incorporated into campus governance by Indonesian universities (Hunga & Mahatma, 2020). It can be concluded that there is a need for assistance to provide support and increase education for women in Ketapang Village so that women there get equal access to education.

The Role of Students in Empowering Women in Ketapang Village

For students, a higher identity means affirmation of their voluntary activities that help face various challenges so that they can devote themselves to the goal of rural revitalization (Ou et al., 2023). Based on the results of the study, there are four roles of students in empowering women in Ketapang Village. (Edowai, 2022) states that the role of students is divided into four, namely agent of change (generation of change), social control (generation of controllers), iron stock (next generation), and moral force (moral movement).

The Role of Students as Agents of Change

Students as agents of change are if there is a problem that occurs in the community, students are expected to help find solutions with the field of knowledge they master in order to create nation building (Edowai, 2022). Based on the results of observations and interviews, students as agents of change (generation of change) are realized by making solutions related to the problems faced by women in Ketapang Village, such as the problem of women's income being relatively middle to low, low understanding of the role of women, lack of awareness of women about the importance of higher education, and lack of awareness of the importance of mental health. The existence of these problems, students provide solutions to change the situation of women by initiating, designing, and implementing women's empowerment programs in Ketapang Village.

Based on the data obtained, students are directly involved in women's empowerment activities, such as conducting seminars, discussions, and training for women empowerment participants. In addition, students have a role in building networks to outside institutions for the process of implementing women's empowerment in Ketapang Village. Students conducted seminars on increasing the role of women and legal marriage, stress management seminars, seminars on the role of women in national income, seminars and training on curriculum preparation, psychoeducation on increasing the role of women, training on the utilization of rice waste straw husks, training on the utilization of rice waste straw catfish cultivation, and UMKM Ketapang Village.

The Role of Students as Social Control

Students as social control is when students can control the social situation around them if the social situation is not in accordance with the nation's goals (Edowai, 2022). Students monitor and respond to Ketapang Village government policies that affect women. Students also carry out education through social media and advocate for gender equality to the entire Ketapang Village community. Students are able to analyze Ketapang Village government policies related to women, holding classes to improve the role of women, classes to increase educational interest, classes to improve mental health and classes to improve the economy and family food security. Through these classes, students directly and bring in professionals to deliver materials that have been tailored to the needs of women's empowerment participants to further educate. The implementation of women's empowerment in Ketapang Village indirectly makes an environmentally friendly movement because it gives direction to participants to bring tumblers (drinking places) when implementing women's empowerment to reduce disposable waste. This is still continuing for community activities in Ketapang Village.

The Role of Students as Iron Stock

Students as iron stock are students who are able to become a group of individuals who have high intellect to replace previous generations (Edowai, 2022). Students provide training to women empowerment participants to create economic independence for women. Students also conduct seminars on the role of women, the importance of education, and mental health. Students organized a free counseling service program for empowerment participants. When implementing women's empowerment, students also encourage participatory participation of participants to create confidence in women to dare to speak up. Students also build networks and collaborate with outside institutions such as DP3AP2KB Central Java Province and the Desa Siaga Sehat Jiwa (DSSJ) Team, CV. Al Barokah, Karang Taruna Desa Ketapang, and PT Berani Tumbuh. This collaboration is useful for maximizing participant education.

The Role of Students as Moral Force

Students as a moral force is when students become a group of individuals who are the guardians of stability in society so that they are obliged to maintain their morals (Edowai, 2022). Students are active in voicing gender equality in the Ketapang Village community. Students are able to maintain cultural and ethical values when in the community. Students when participating in Ketapang Village community activities do not forget to always take the time to educate about gender equality. Students are also able to encourage women's motivation in participating in women's empowerment.



Picture 1. Students Implement Women's Empowerment in Ketapang Village

The role of students in empowering women in Ketapang Village was successfully carried out for women empowerment participants, the creation of increased awareness of gender equality seen from participants began to realize that their role could have an impact on the community order, economic independence of women through direct involvement in training in making fertilizers, briquettes, and cultivation in buckets which hopefully can foster economic independence, knowledge of the importance of mental health, and knowledge of the importance of higher education for women.

Women's Empowerment Strategy

When women's empowerment is carried out, it not only changes behavior, but can have more knowledge (Adwiyah et al., 2020). Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, it was found that the strategies in empowering women in Ketapang Village have three stages. Women's empowerment strategies can be carried out by dismantling the myth of women's roles, providing various skills for women, providing opportunities for women to access education Zakiyah, 2010 in (Rosramadhana et al., 2022). Every empowerment process always seeks independence, economic, institutional, and social independence (Pratiyudha et al., 2022). Empowerment strategies must be carried out quickly to answer the demands of society (Miradj & Shofwan, 2021).

Debunking the Myth of Women's Role

Women's welfare and women's voices are not well represented and are often ignored (Ramli & Elatrash, 2021). Women used to have two assumptions in society, namely konco

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wingking (friends in the back) and for husbands nunut neraka katut (to heaven come along, to hell carried away) Zakiyah, 2010 in (Rosramadhana et al., 2022). However, now women are able to be equal to men (Fatimah & Mukhibat, 2023). Women have a strategic role in supporting development because their involvement can no longer be limited by gender differences (Mansari, 2018). Based on the results of observations and interviews, women's empowerment participants have been able to change their perspective on themselves as women. Before women's empowerment, they felt that women were only given very limited space to move and felt that they could not have the same position as men. Women empowerment participants have opened their perspectives, have confidence and have the enthusiasm to learn new things and feel the desire to change their lives to be better than before. However, they still need support and understanding from the village government and other communities to make Ketapang Village women have gender justice in various sectors of life. Differences in functions and roles between men and women cannot be determined due to biological differences or nature (Fujiati, 2017). Recognizing the contributions, building trust, and giving voice to women will create opportunities for women's issues to be included in the development agenda (Rosyada et al., 2023).

Providing Women's Skills

The purpose of providing skills to women so that they become productive and do not depend on men Zakiyah, 2010 in (Rosramadhana et al., 2022). Students actively provide several skills to women empowerment participants. The skills provided to women empowerment participants include catfish cultivation training in buckets, briquette making training, composting training, financial managerial training, and administrative training. In the bucket catfish cultivation training, students invited one of the catfish pond owners in the Ketapang Village area to provide a demonstration of how to properly cultivate catfish in order to get good catfish results. In addition, participants were given catfish seeds, buckets, catfish feed so that they could be cultivated at home.

Training on making briquettes and compost, students actively demonstrate the procedures for making them which are followed by women empowerment participants. Financial managerial training, at first students provide education that has been tailored to the needs of empowerment participants, after that students and women empowerment participants both apply the theories that have been delivered to be made so that when practicing participants still have questions can be directly asked by students to get satisfactory results. Administrative training, students prepare laptop devices for training participants to use. The training provides participants with the skills to be able to operate a laptop and be able to make administration such as making letters and canva designs.

Providing Opportunities for Women to Access Education

Providing opportunities for women to access education is an effort for women to follow or pursue education because there is still a paradigm in society that women will only return to the kitchen Zakiyah, 2010 in (Rosramadhana et al., 2022). When women have a high level of education, the opportunity for opportunities to get strategic positions is greater (Mustakim, 2021). At this stage, students provide additional education to empowerment participants such as bringing in guidance and counseling lecturers to provide education about mental health and sustainable career resilience. The implementation of the lecturer provides knowledge to participants and participants are given an overview of the participants to take their role as parents to build children's career resilience and are given an overview of how to care for mental health, and first aid in handling mental health. The implementation gave participants the freedom to ask questions, express their concerns, and express their opinions. This is useful to build their confidence. Before and after the implementation of women's empowerment, participants take pre and post tests so that students can measure participants' understanding. Education empowers individuals by increasing their capacity to think critically, make decisions, and participate in social processes.

Supporting and inhibiting factors for women's empowerment

The implementation of women's empowerment in Ketapang Village certainly has a positive impact on participants. Community participation is one of the supporting factors for the success of a program (Hamia et al., 2021). The supporting factors for the implementation of women's empowerment in Ketapang Village are (1) support from the village community and village government (2) the closeness of students to participants (3) enthusiasm of women's empowerment participants (4) cooperation with outside institutions (5) social environment. However, the inhibiting factors for the implementation of women's empowerment include (1) the time of implementation (2) the place of implementation. An understanding of the supporting factors and inhibiting factors of women's empowerment carried out in Ketapang Village is a new hope for improving gender equality in the village and further strengthening and handling problems. The state encourages women's participation in the economic field, but in gender construction women are still considered the main responsibility for household affairs (Eddyono, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The roles of students in empowering women in Ketapang Village has been significant. Students are involved in various activities such as seminars, discussions, and training to improve gender equality. In the implementation of women's empowerment, students are involved as initiators, facilitators, and implementers. Women's empowerment strategies carried out by students include breaking down the stigma of women, providing various skills, and providing the widest possible opportunity for women to get education. This can be done well because of the support and cooperation between students and the village government, participants, and outside institutions, but there are still obstacles to the implementations of women's empowerment, namely a more convenient time and place for implementation. Based on the findings of this study, students have great potential in accelerating national development through women's empowerment, but the resulting impact can be maximized if the women involved are women who most need empowerment. Recommendations for future research include increasing women's participation and identifying challenges faced by students in the implementation of women's empowerment.

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