

## Rural Women's Agency

### Editorial

Rural Women's Agency

### Articles

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*Iwan Nurdin & Julian Aldrin Pasha*

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When Wetlands Dry: Feminist Political Ecology Study on Peat Ecosystem Degradation in South and Central Kalimantan  
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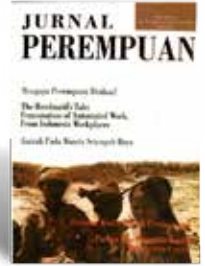
Women as Agent of Social Inclusion: Experience of the Women of a Local Belief Community in Salamrejo Village  
*Dewi Komalasari*

Rural Women's Agency on Forest and Land Governance in The Midst of Change: Case Study in Five Provinces  
*Andi Misbahul Pratiwi & Abby Gina Boangmanalu*

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First published in November 2019

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## Rural Women's Agency

Rural women and rural area constitute an ecosystem that is inseparable from the nature. The lives of rural community, including the women, have a close relation with its surrounding natural environment. First, the natural environment is the backbone of rural economy, particularly in agricultural sector. Second, the natural environment is the source of basic daily needs such as water and food. Aside from that, the natural environment has also been part of the local cultural such as handicrafts or as part of local beliefs and rituals. Subsequently, the disruption or change of the natural environment will definitely bring impact to the lives of rural community.

For women, the impact of the environmental changes are obvious due to their reproductive tasks in the households. For example, draught of the peat lands would decrease water and food supplies that must be managed by women in the rural peat area. Environmental destruction in rural peat area also urge men to migrate out to find a job, then women must act as the heads of the households as well as housewives.

One of the roots of inequality in the rural community stem from the weak access and control over land and forest governance. For women, the inequality is also intertwined with gender-based discrimination such as domestication of women. Women's domestication widens barriers of women's access to land, natural resources, information, law, and politics. UN Women's data (2018) finds that women ownership over agricultural land is less than 13%. In the meantime, despite the positive trend on agrarian reform policy in the recent years, gender-justice perspective has not been integrated into the agrarian policy in Indonesia. As the consequence, women still tend to be neglected within the policy which supposedly could give community's access to land and natural resources.

In general, rural women remain to be the responsible person in caregiving works, household care, family economic management, whilst being excluded from public realm. The similar pattern could be seen in rural areas. Rural areas are the main provider of source for natural resources, provider agricultural and plantation areas, labor force's provider, and with its forest area they also function as the lungs of the earth. However, similar to Simone de Beauvoir's criticism about women's position as "the second sex", rural community are also often identified as second-class community, whose meaning is closely linked to underdevelopment, vulnerable to poverty, and often being underestimated in policies on investment and development.

Diana Tietjen Meyers in *Gender in the Mirror: Cultural Imagery & Women Agency (2002)* analyzes how subordination over women influence the formation of women's gender identity, and restricting women from making emancipatory decisions. Rural women are also tended to be seen as persons without subjectivity, nor agency. But Meyer argues that even in its subordinate position, women still have agencies. Therefore, the view of rural women as subject with agency is presented in this JP 103 edition.

Jurnal Perempuan's research about rural women's experiences in five provinces, namely West Papua, East Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, Bengkulu and Aceh, shows diverse women's agency on land and forest governance in rural environment. Women agency appear in their power to persuade family and community, in their power to involve in public space, also in their power to change the perspective of official authority, also in their power to carry out collective action/ solidarity among groups in natural resources management. Rural women also possess contextual knowledge that is compatible to the rural livelihood, for instance the ability of Papuan women to choose a model of shifting agriculture as a sustainable model economy of agriculture.

The ignorance of science towards women's experience is one of the reasons for the rise of feminist's studies. Feminism found the concept of knowledge, that was born from the criticism toward the scientific approach, by looking at the complexities of interconnectivity among women, society and nature, such as in the concept of feminist political ecology. However, Carolyn E. Sachs in *Gendered Fields: Rural Women, Agriculture and Environment (1996)* found that feminist's studies tend to focus on urban feminist movement. Articulation about feminist movement in rural areas is still very limited, because science also tends to view rural community as an object, object of policy, object of poverty or object of development.

Therefore, in order to provide space about and for rural women, JP 103 presents various experiences of rural women and their agencies in dealing with the subordination of patriarchy and capitalism. JP 103 takes us to understand the agency of rural women as a process to train and to make use of the ability to construct themselves and make decisions on matters concerning the lives of rural women as well as the lives of rural communities in Indonesia. **(Atnike Nova Sigiro)**



Abstracts Sheet

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Iwan Nurdin & Julian Aldrin Pasha  
(Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia)

**The Lack of Gender Mainstreaming on the Presidential Regulation No. 86/2018 on Agrarian Reform**

DDC: 305  
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 24 No. 4, November 2019, pp. 227-235, 2 table, 15 ref.

The situation of agrarian injustice in the rural area carries multiple layers of burden on women. Such situation could be addressed with the agrarian reform's agenda. This is the reason why the society welcome the announcement of agrarian reform agenda as Joko Widodo administration's priority program. After being in power for four years, finally the government had issued the Presidential Regulation No. 86 year of 2018 on Agrarian Reform. The enactment of this Agrarian Reform's policy cannot be separated from the role of social movement organizations in urging for agrarian reform agenda, including in urging for an agrarian reform policy with gender justice perspective. This paper seeks to see how women's movement and the agrarian reform movement have been trying to advocate gender perspective in the formulation and the implementation of the Presidential Regulation (Perpres).

Keywords: agrarian reform, rural development, rural women, land redistribution.

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Hatib Abdul Kadir & Gilang Mahadika  
(Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia)

**Economic Practices of 'Mama-Mama Papua' using Shifting Cultivation System: Study Case in Sorong and Maybrat Regencies- Western Papua**

DDC: 305  
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 24 No. 4, November 2019, pp. 237-247, 4 image, 15 ref.

This research examines women's role and their decision-making related to swidden farming. This research was conducted in two different regions, Sorong (lowland) and Maybrat (highland) in West Papua. Key informants in this research were indigenous Papuan women, their husbands, and relatives. The aim of the research is to demonstrate that in the realm of traditional agriculture, women play important roles, starting from production, plant nursery, to the crop distribution to market. Nonetheless, the role of women tends to disappear, when the system of agriculture changes to sedentary farming by using chemical substances and other modern and farming technologies

Keywords: shifting agriculture, taking decision, traditional market, agriculture commodities.

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Abdullah Abdul Muthaleb  
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**Rural Women and Information on Natural Resources: Rural Women in Aceh's Struggle for Agency**

DDC: 305  
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 24 No. 4, November 2019, pp. 249-257, 2 table, 10 ref.

Rural women have the potential to mobilize herself and her community towards a sovereign and just rural community. However, rural women frequently face form of discrimination that impede them to achieve their maximum potential. In the midst of forest and land degradation, those gender-based discrimination also prevent women from participating in land and forest governance that is vital for the rural community's livelihood. An example of form of gender-based discrimination experienced by women in several regions in Aceh is discrimination in accessing public information. This article describes and analyzes several Aceh women's experiences in using the rights-based approach on access to information. The women in this article have used the Law on Public Information as the basis for their advocacy towards the land and forest governance in their residential area. These experiences of the rural women have shown shows that women have not only interests upon the information on natural resources, but they also possess capability, perseverance, and will to obtain such information.

Keywords: rural women, natural resources, access to information, public information.

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**Involvement of Women Village Leaders in Developing Dialogues on Forest Conflict Resolution**

DDC: 305  
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 24 No. 4, November 2019, pp. 259-270, 2 image, 32 ref.

This article is a study of feminist ecological politics in rural women's leadership and their involvement in resolving conflicts over protected forests. On the one hand, structurally, there is a complex linkage between social, cultural, adat, and religious practices that prevent women from becoming leaders. On the other hand, after they won the leadership contestation in the village, their task was able to go beyond reconciliation and introduce an alternative discourse on sustainable forest conservation. This study examines three main areas namely: (1) ecological sustainability knowledge, understanding and practices; (2) the practice of equal access to natural resources, and responses to vulnerability to environmental change; and (3) equality practices in village development activism. The narrative of feminist ecological political studies from two villages in Kepahiang and Rejang Lebong Districts shows that women village heads are able to penetrate structural barriers, social exclusion, and dismantle economic class barriers.

Keywords: rural women's leadership, feminist political ecology, forest conflict

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**When Wetlands Dry: Feminist Political Ecology Study on Peat Ecosystem Degradation in South and Central Kalimantan**

DDC: 305  
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 24 No. 4, November 2019, pp. 271-284, 1 table, 9 ref.

Indonesia tropical peatlands area is 47 percent of out of the total global peatlands. But unfortunately, sustainable peatland governance has not been widely applied in the management of peatlands, instead of being home to biodiversity, peatlands in Indonesia have ended up dry, burning and turned into monoculture plantations. The problem of peat ecosystem degradation is the result of unsustainable - historical environmental governance politics. This study shows the political complexity of peatland governance and its impact on women with a feminist political ecology lens. This research was conducted in several villages in Central and South Kalimantan, the largest tropical peat areas in Indonesia. This study found that 1) Rural women were realized that there are problems with peatland governance, both practically and politically; 2) women and girls have multiple impacts from peat ecosystem degradation ie, women are deprived of living space, women find it difficult to get water and food sources, women take over the role of the head of the family because men migrate but are not always recognized as the head of the family, and women are impoverished because they lose their independence and must work as oil palm workers. This study uses a feminist political ecology study as an analytical tool to see the multi-layered oppression experienced by rural women due to peat ecosystem degradation.

Keywords: rural women, peatland village, peat ecosystem, feminist political ecology, resource governance

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Dewi Komalasari  
(Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, Indonesia)

**Women as Agent of Social Inclusion: Experience of the Women of a Local Belief Community in Salamrejo Village**

DDC: 305  
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 24 No. 4, November 2019, pp. 285-294, 1 image, 1 table, 23 ref.

Minority religious groups are vulnerable towards discrimination and social exclusion. Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon that is closely related to the denial of the enjoyment of civil and political

rights as well as economic and socio-cultural rights. Social exclusion also excludes the excluded people from development process in the village. This article discusses the social exclusion experienced by community of local belief's groups, the Association of Ekasing Budi Murko (PEBM) in Salamrejo village, in Kulon Progo, Special Autonomy of Yogyakarta. The economic empowerment approach has been used to promote inclusion among communities in the village. The establishment of Cooperative Business Group (KUBE) and also other economic works have encouraged women's role as agent for social inclusion. Business activities established by PEBM have opened room for interaction between women from local belief's community with other women in the village.

Keywords: social exclusion, social inclusion, local belief, women's empowerment, women's agency

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Andi Misbahul Pratiwi & Abby Gina Boangmanalu  
(Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, Indonesia)

**Rural Women's Agency on Forest and Land Governance in The Midst of Change: Case Study in Five Provinces**

DDC: 305  
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 24 No. 4, November 2019, pp. 295-306, 2 table, 12 ref.

Women in rural areas face serious problems as a result of ecological social changes in the village--which are almost mutually interconnected with the expansion of extractive industries and rural development paradigm. Forests and land become as the identity that cannot be left behind in seeing changes in rural areas. Sustainable forest and land governance are one of the ways to reduce the risk of environmental damage & degradation, land use change, deforestation, and loss of food resources and livelihoods of rural communities. One of the principles of sustainable forest and land governance is transparency and participation. In this study we found, explain, and analyse 1) how the social ecological changes in the villages through the experiences of women who is a trailblazer or local champion in 5 provinces (West Papua, East Kalimantan, Aceh, Central Sulawesi, Bengkulu); 2) the struggle of rural women in seizing the right to information and participation in the process of forest and land governance; 3) women's agency in creating positive socio-ecological changes in the village area. This research found that women's agencies are not single and are produced from various forms of power, namely the power/ability to influence and reduce barriers, to change at the household and community level, the power to organize and change existing hierarchies, the power to increase individual awareness and the desire to change, the strength of collective action and solidarity.

Keywords: rural women, forest and land governance, women's agency, environmental degradation, sustainable environment.

## Women as Agent of Social Inclusion: Experience of the Women of a Local Belief Community in Salamrejo Village

**Dewi Komalasari**

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Chronology of Manuscript: Received 21 November 2019, revised 1 December 2019, officially accepted 1 December 2019

### Abstract

Minority religious groups are vulnerable towards discrimination and social exclusion. Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon that is closely related to the denial of the application of civil and political rights as well as economic and socio-cultural rights. Social exclusion also prevents the marginalized people to share the fruit of development in the village. This article discusses the social exclusion experienced by community of local belief, the *Eklasing Budi Murko Association (PEBM)* in Salamrejo village, in Kulon Progo, the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The economic empowerment approach is used to build an inclusive village for communities of local belief in Salamrejo. The establishment of the Joint Business Group (KUBE) and other economic business units has put forward the role of women as agents of social inclusion. Business Business activities in the business units formed by the Budi Murko Eklasing Association (PEBM) have provided a platform for interaction between women who hold the local belief and other women in the village.

Keywords: social exclusion, social inclusion, local belief, women's empowerment, women's agency

### Introduction

In the 2010 national census (BPS 2019), the numbers of followers of religious minorities including local beliefs in Indonesia were relatively small. The number of followers of religious minorities and beliefs was only 0.13 percent of the total population, or around 266,617 people. From the census, of 0.06 percent or 139,582 people chose not to answer, and of 0.32 percent or 757,118 people were not asked about their religion. Meanwhile, data from the Directorate of Beliefs and Tradition in 2018 recorded of 190 centers of belief organizations, and of 985 branches organizations (Kemdikbud 2019). The same data recorded that these organizations have at least twelve million followers spread from Sumatra, Java, to Sulawesi.

In some parts of Indonesia, minority religious groups, and followers of local beliefs often experience social exclusion. The forms of social exclusion that are commonly experienced for example are: stigma; lack of legal identity; barriers to access social services such as health and education; loss of economic assets, sources of livelihood and right to worship; and exclusion from community activities both exclusion and also threats and violence (Program Peduli 2016). In a working paper prepared by Program Peduli, an estimated of 500,000 to

1 million people had experienced discrimination against religious minorities/ beliefs (Program PEDULI 2015a).

Social exclusion is a process in which individuals or groups, both partially or entirely, are not included or excluded from full participation in the community in which they live (Rawal 2008). Research by Program Peduli (2015b) found about 1,045 cases of exclusion that were experienced by vulnerable groups, including against ancestral religious groups and followers of local beliefs. Nearly half of those cases occurred in the form of vertical exclusions that are perpetrated by the state were 500 cases. Meanwhile, the number of horizontal exclusions perpetrated by community and coincided with vertical exclusions perpetrated by the state were 227 cases (Program Peduli 2015b).

A study conducted by the Program Peduli (2016) also found the two most common forms of social exclusion. *First*, barriers in accessing official identity documents by the state. Without the ownership of these documents, consequently, they can not access various public services and opportunities to work. *Second*, in the form of stigmatization by the community. Program Peduli's study (2015b) found existing correlation between the failure of the states to recognize their citizenship rights with the

stigma at the community level. For example, people who are denied legal identity by the state are also more likely to experience exclusion in the form of stigma in their communities.

**Table 1. Forms of Exclusion Experienced by Marginalized Groups**

Forms of Exclusion	# number fo cases	Leading Actor
Negative stigma and labeling	75	State and community
State’s failure to recognize citizenship	73	State
Social isolation	42	State and community
Restrictions of freedom of expression	38	Community
Barriers to access education	38	State
Rejection of recognition of religious rights	34	State
Barriers to social and health services	33	State
Intimidation from security officers	31	State
Excluded from public services	25	State
No access to obtain legal identity	25	State

Source: Bi-Annual TAF Program Peduli Report July - November 2015

Quite often the stigma ended up with conflict and violent attacks that resulted in casualties. The attack against Ahmadiyah congregation in Cikeusik in 2011 have killed three people, as well as the attack on the Shia community in Sampang that forced them to evacuate and displaced from their homes, were some examples of exclusion that led to violence (Human Rights Watch 2013).

Exclusion that were experienced by religious minorities and followers of local beliefs cause them to lose their rights to participate and express their opinions in community forums (Program Peduli 2016). Because of being excluded from development process, then they were unable to make suggestions regarding the development programs they need. In turn, this situation prevents the communities of religious minorities and beliefs from enjoying development programs and results. Therefore, as citizens, they lose their fundamental rights to obtain protection, respect, and welfare from the state.

The other findings of the study includes economic exclusion that were experienced by vulnerable groups (Program Peduli 2016). Economic exclusions that were experienced include, for example, the inability to access lending services due to the lack of legal identity, including exclusion of job opportunities and market due to the prejudices attached to them. Various vulnerable groups are excluded from communities because they are considered to be different and also because of the stigma against them. These exclusion and stigma have put them susceptible to poverty.

This article will describe and analyze the experiences of women of local beliefs, the members of Budi Murko Eklasing Association (PEBM), as social inclusion agents in Salamrejo village. PEBM members are *kejawen* spiritual followers that teaches social life etiquette, aspects of life, belief in God and the universe, and exploration of cultural heritage of the ancestors (Agatha Dian L, et al. 2016).

The majority of population in Salamrejo village are Javanese, who still uphold indigenous Javanese customs and culture. In Javanese culture, an existing term to define a woman as *konco wingking* (behind/ supporting actors). This concept can be interpreted that women have role as ‘supporting actors’ with reproductive and domestic’s tasks, and place at the back because they are less important and must be hid (Program Peduli 2017b). In their position as women and at the same time as followers of minority beliefs put them in a multi-layered minority position and are vulnerable to multi-layered discrimination.

By elaborating and analysing the agency of women from a local belief community in Salamrejo village in promoting social inclusion, this article will answer the following questions. First, what efforts have been undertaken by PEBM in order to expand the social acceptance from the local community? Second, how is women’s role and agency in promoting social inclusion in Salamrejo village?

This article was written using document and literature review method. The document that were used as the primary source of data are the progress report of PEDULI

program that was produced by The Asia Foundation (TAF), along with studies that were conducted by TAF's partners, particularly Satunama and LKIS, and also field notes of partner organizations. The research use documents from the range of periode from 2014 to 2019. The analysis was also made based on the village history books, policy papers of partners organizations that were attached in their reports. The concepts of social exclusion and inclusion, as well as women's agency and empowerment, are being used as some of the theoretical concepts applied this article.

### **Theoretical Studies on Exclusion and Inclusion**

Meaningful and sustainable poverty reduction for those who are socially excluded would require changes in the social structures that govern access to economic resources and opportunities (Program Peduli 2015a). Social exclusion can be seen as a multidimensional and dynamic concept that closely related to civil and political rights as well as economic and social rights (Gore and Figueiredo 1997). This argumen is reiterated by De Haan (1998), who mentioned that social exclusion is characterized by the inability of groups or individuals to participate in the underlying political, economic, and social functions of the society.

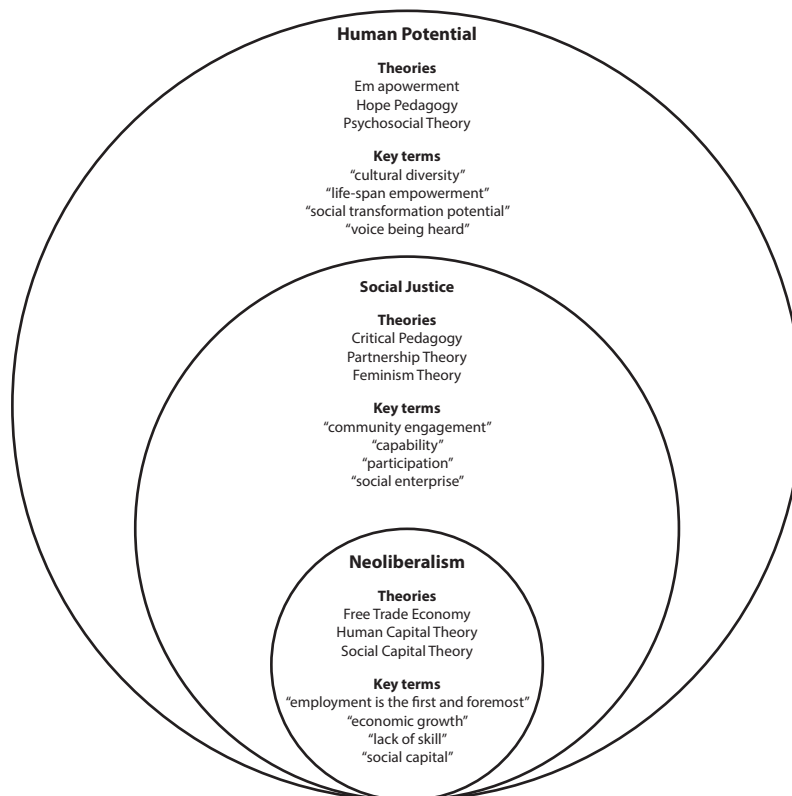
Aasland and Flotten (Rawal 2008) described social exclusion as a multidimensional phenomenon that can be seen from several variables of the living conditions that are important as proxies for social exclusion, namely: 1) Exclusion from formal citizenship rights; 2) Exclusion from the labor market; 3) Exclusion from participation in civil society, and 4) Exclusion from the social arena. Still, according to Aaslan and Flotten, at the first glance, it may be seen that someone was not socially excluded. Therefore, it is necessary to pay close attention to indicators, degrees, and levels of participation in different areas and observe how they are interrelated.

Social exclusion operates at various social levels, encompassing political, cultural, and economic dimensions, that influencing people in different ways at different times, and often is the result of unequal power relations (Program Peduli 2016). Impact social exclusion, according to Young (2000), does not always make the excluded individual or community becoming poor. However, the exclusion would prevent them from participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the communities where they live.

The most common and easily recognized forms of social exclusion are stigma and stigmatization (Allman 2013). According to Kurzban & Leary (Allman 2013), stigma is a process that directs specific individuals to "be systematically excluded from certain types of social interactions because they have certain characteristics or members of certain groups."

Social inclusion is the process to build social relationships and to respect individuals and communities so that they can participate fully in decision making; economic, social, political and cultural life; and have fair access and control over resources (to meet basic needs) to enjoy welfare standards that deem appropriate according to their communities (Program Peduli 2015a). This approach has been used to address social exclusion that have been experienced by vulnerable groups, including religious minority groups/ community of local beliefs. Allman explained social inclusion as an effort to deal with prejudice and discrimination that compose the components of stigmatization (Allman 2013).

Social inclusion could happen due to various social groupings, including demographic differentiation concerning socioeconomic status; cultures and languages, including local/ indigenous groups; religion; geography, including those in the regions, villages and/ or remoted areas; gender and sexual orientation; age, including youth groups and elderly people; health, including physical and mental disabilities; unemployment; homelessness and detention/ imprisonment (Gidley et al. 2010).



**Figure 1. The Ideological Spectrum Underlying Theory and Policy of Social Inclusion**

Source: Gidley et al. 2010

Gidley et al. (2010) distinguish the degree of social inclusion in several categories with the narrowest interpretation is related to the neoliberalism notion of social inclusion as access. A broader interpretation on the idea of social justice views social inclusion as participation. Meanwhile, the broadest interpretation of social inclusion involves a lens of human potential that sees social inclusion as empowerment.

From the perspective of the neoliberalism ideology, increasing social inclusion is closely related to investment in human resources and improving the number of skilled workers solely for economic growth as part of the national agenda in the country's economic development in order to perform better in the competitive global markets. Key terms used in theories and policies that are based on this perspective are terms such as work, work and work; economic growth, lack of skills, social capital.

From the perspective of social justice ideology, increasing social inclusion is closely related to human rights, equal opportunities, human dignity, and justice for all. Social inclusion may or may not be related to economic interests, but the ultimate goal is to enable all humans to participate fully in society with respect

to their human dignity. This reasoning is the basis for involvement and participation of the society.

From an ideological perspective of human potential, increasing social inclusion goes beyond just justice and human rights and seeks to maximize the potential of every human being. The human potential approach focus on the interpretation of social inclusion as empowerment, which involves the importance of morality when dealing with the complexities of humanity. It is this perspective that lies behind the idea that all humans, both the general population and marginal groups, are multi-dimensional beings. They also have needs and interests, which go beyond their role in a country's political economy. Here, social inclusion respects differences and diversity and leads to collective individualism.

### Background of Salamrejo Village

Salamrejo Village, which is part of Sentolo Subdistrict, Kulon Progo District, Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), has been established since 1933 through the merger of two villages, namely: Jlegong and Salam. After the merger, the name changed to Salamrejo, which means Happy and Prosperous (Agatha Dian L et al. 2016).

Salamrejo village, which is situated near the banks of the Progo River with hilly topography, is an agricultural area with its main commodities of rice, cassava, and corn. The farms in Salamrejo village usually grow livestock such as cows, goats, and chickens. Meanwhile, its fisheries' products are inland fisheries in artificial ponds. The Progo river that runs through the village has been used for some of the community members to earn fortune by mining the sands. The banks of the river are also used as tourist destination for fishing, rafting, and other outdoor activities.

Some part of the village are in the south is crossed by a national road, the main road that cross Java island. Furthermore, Salamrejo village is also divided by a provincial road between Bantul District and Kulon Progo District. The population distribution in Salamrejo Village follows the provincial road, and some are spread and concentrated in the Padukuhan area. The residents generally live around the roads that connect with the trade center.

Geographical factors of Salamrejo village also influence the livelihood of this village. One of the examples is the majority livelihood of the population as farmers, as well as the ties of community members with their villages or homeland. Relationships among members of the community are more intimate and long-lasting, which is characterized by the sustainability of traditions such as *Rewang*, *Sambatan*, *Baritan*, or sea alms as well as earth alms, which are routinely carried out every *Suro* month.

While waiting for the harvest, most of the residents fill their time as craftsmen. Quite a few of them depend on their lives from handicraft business. The handicraft business that produce household utensils from Agel (*Corypha Gebanga*) natural fiber materials has been going on for decades. Salamrejo natural fiber handicrafts were so popular in Kulon Progo and even Yogyakarta in the period 1980 to around 2005 and can be easily found in large markets. The natural fiber handicraft products are also sold as souvenirs for tourists in tourist destination locations. Some of the residents still take the handicraft business as their main source of income, although the scarcity of raw materials has caused its popularity to fade in the mid-1980s.

Javanese community uses Javanese as a spoken language for daily communication, and language in social events such as marriage. Community of Salamrejo village also still preserve Javanese traditional ceremonies. Some activities in the Javanese tradition are also still maintained until today, such as *Nyadran*, *Selikuran*, *Tirakatan*, and

other traditional rituals. Moreover, Salamrejo Village residents still use Javanese calendar system in every traditional ceremony and routine activities.

Similar to other villages, social institution also presence in Salamrejo Village, such as the Village Community Empowerment Institute (LPMD), Village Owned Enterprises (Perumdes), Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK), Youth Organization, Farmers Group Association (Gapoktan), Integrated Health Service Posts (Posyandu) and others. In addition, there are also various communities ranging from sports clubs, social gathering (*arisan*) groups, art groups, business groups or cooperatives to religious-based groups such as the As-Salam Mosque Jamaah recitation group, the St. Peter Canisius prayer group, and Budi Murko Eklasing Association (PEBM).

### PEBM as the Other

PEBM (Budi Murko Eklasing Community or Association) is one of the communities of local belief in Salamrejo village. PEBM is a relatively large community of belief followers. According to the estimation of LKIS (Institute of Social Sciences Studies), the number of PEBM members in Kulon Progo currently reaches approximately 160 people. At the same time, in Salamrejo village, there are around 100 people (Satunama 2018).

PEBM community has a fairly complex structure. In PEBM, there is a leader called *Kepolo Wargo*, then there is *Panitera Kasepuhan*. According to Javanese system, it is called the *Pangarso Wargo*, and then there is *Panuntun Wargo*, then there are ordinary citizens or members (Agatha Dian et al. 2016). PEBM members in Salamrejo village have regular meetings once a week. In addition to that, there is also social gatherings (*arisan*) meetings for members. Organizationally, PEBM Kulon Progo is registered in the Ministry of Law and Human Rights under the name of Budi Murko Eklasing Association (PEBM).

PEBM members are not coming from the followers of the belief but also some of their family members, both those who are believers or not. PEBM community is spread in various villages in Kulon Progo, but the largest numbers is in the village of Salamrejo, Sentholo sub-district (Satunama 2018).

Salamrejo village has a strategic position for PEBM, because Mbah Mangun, as a PEBM elder and spiritual leader, lives in Salamrejo. Various rituals and key meetings are often held at Mbah Mangun's residence. Thus it can be said that Salamrejo village is a center for PEBM Kulon Progo community (Satunama 2018).

Because of its closed nature, not much information is available about the core teaching of PEBM as a religious teaching. One of the rules of PEBM prohibits recording their teachings in writing. The religious doctrine is explained and delivered verbally to others. Although it is permissible to explain about their teachings, but all of PEBM members do not have any book or holy book to explain these teachings, so it is quite difficult for the general public to understand them.

In an interview conducted by Satunama, Mbah Mangun explained the core teachings of *Eklasing Budi Murko*, which can be interpreted as "Letting go excessive lust." The principle is closely related to the core teachings of PEBM. Mbah Mangun explained that there is nothing wrong with having passion or ambition as long as it is still under control. In addition, he also stressed the importance of emotional balance and discernment before taking any action. According to the teachings of PEBM, feelings in the heart are far more important than thoughts because the mind can lie. According to PEBM teachings, the mind can distract a person from his true feelings (Satunama 2018, Interview 28 October).

In terms of divinity, PEBM's key human principle is to process their feelings and get closer to the creator, through regular meditation. Silence unites the elements that are inherent to meet God, which is expected to bring guidance from God (Agatha Dian L, et al. 2016). However, due to different practices, such as rituals, meditation, lighting incense, laying down offerings, and other metaphysical matters, MEBM also faces stigmas from the surrounding community.

Due to beliefs and worship procedures that are different and not in accordance with prevailing customs and are considered normal in society, the PEBM community often receive stigma. The stigma as an infidel is attached to PEBM community because they not carry out rituals of worship that are required by the official religion stated on their ID. The stigma attached to followers of local beliefs in Kulon Progo has a long history. One of the stigmas faced by PEBM community is a stigma as members of (Indonesia Communist Party) PKI and communist. PEBM community is often associated with the September 1965 movement (Satunama 2018).

These stigmas are the cause of the marginalization of PEBM community from the Salamrejo community. They are not involved in the development processes or village's forums. This marginalization makes PEBM community to become a group that is not confident, indifferent, and disenfranchised from the outside groups. During the initial period when LKiS startee to assist the

community, PEBM followers still found it difficult to talk to outside groups, especially those considered foreigners (Satunama 2018). They tend to isolate themselves as forms and strategies for protection so that the existence of the PEBM community in the village of Salamrejo is almost inaudible.

### **The Minority's Multi-Layered Burden of Women of Local Beliefs**

In all groups that experience social exclusion, women are culturally and structurally most vulnerable, as well as prone to violence, exploitation, marginalization, stigma, and subordination (Program Peduli 2017). The same situation happen to the women of local beliefs. Women and children from minority religious groups are vulnerable to violence because of their religious expressions (Program Peduli 2017a). The forms of violence come in different forms starting from verbal and psychological insults to the physical condition of the women, forced school dropouts, barriers to access marriages according to their beliefs, forced divorce due to maintaining their beliefs, difficulties getting divorce papers, barriers to access property such as land or venture capital, barriers to access health services and psychosocial services for victims who have experienced trauma, barriers to access and to participate in political decisions at community meetings.

Civil registration marriages only accept applications for marriages' registration that are carried out using religious and belief laws that are officially recognized in Indonesia. A marriage that is carried out according to tradition or belief that has not been officially recognized cannot be legally registered into the civil registry. Without marriage certificate as an application requirement for birth certificates, therefore the birth certificate of the child from belief-follower parent includes the mother's name, without adding the father's name. Consequently, the law only recognizes the relationship of the child and the mother, and the child is considered to be a child born out of wedlock (Rahmi 2019).

Women who experience exclusion are usually not accepted by the community because of the negative perceptions about them (Program Peduli 2015a). They are not invited to participate in community activities. Therefore, they could not participate in any planning and decision-making process in the community. Due to their absence in community activities, they have limited access to information regarding government policies or programs. Because they tend to be closed and isolated, they also do not know how to access information. As a

result, they are not touched by social welfare programs that are organized by the government.

Women are not the head of the family who are expected to be involved in decision making. In the traditional Javanese values' system, the term woman is defined with the concept of "*konco wingking*". This concept views that women do not have important role, responsible for domestic work, and belong to the supporting class (Program Peduli 2017b). Women who stay at home, do not make decisions, will be most suffer, especially children. If the husband stops working due violence, women remain to be responsible for managing the household, providing food for family members, plus having to take care of the children. Women's vulnerability increase because they have to face pressure both at home and in their social environment.

LKiS that assist communities of local beliefs in Java such as Budi Murka Ekling Association (PEBM), *Samara, Pangestu, Sabdotama, Pawang Putih and Aliran Perjalanan* found that participation the women of local belief in public sphere is still limited. Previously, women could not go out in the morning because they had to tend work in the farm. Village women can only be seen around 9 to 11 noon. The stigma gradually shifts before finally women can attend meetings that affect their own lives (Program Peduli 2017b).

Although holding domestic responsibilities, women still bear double burden. Even though responsible for domestic affairs, poverty also force women to be breadwinner (Wardani 2019). This condition is found in almost all marginalized groups that experience social exclusion, such as local belief's followers, victims of past human rights violations, groups of transwomen, and prostituted children (Program Peduli 2017b). On the other hand, because of the social exclusion that they experienced, they do not have access to loan assistance and limited access to economic opportunities. The people around them do not trust them, and their businesses are boycotted, they also do not have security. Their network for obtaining employment opportunities is also limited.

Women will be the most impoverished group because of the stigma attached by society over various factors that distinguish them such as infidels, atheists, PKI, heretical sects (Wardani 2019). Women are generally characterized by their social interactions with other women. However, the stigma attached to women of local belief prevent them from engaging in social interaction with other women in the village. As a result, they live in a limited and depressing space. The exclusion that occurred bring impact to the limited access to source of livelihoods.

Especially if the stigma is produced systematically for many years by the State system.

### **Expanding social acceptance through the Social Inclusion approach**

Program Peduli uses social inclusion approach give benefit to the excluded groups (Program Peduli 2015a). Social inclusion, as an approach, has dynamic and responsive character to the local context. Starting from the multidimensional character of social exclusion, then the social inclusion strategy chosen to target the aspects of social exclusion that are experienced by PEBM communities. The strategy is derived from series of approaches at the individual, family, community, and policy levels.

PEBM group is considered as the other in the local community and has never been involved in the development processes or village's forums. PEBM members are scattered in villages and practice their belief in small groups that tend to be closed to parties outside the group. Therefore, increasing social acceptance becomes important, and becomes a starting point to increase recognition of their existence. Social acceptance or social inclusion is a part of efforts in increasing the fulfillment of human rights of marginalized communities, which includes increasing empowerment, community participation, protection against violence and exploitation, and improvement as well as social acceptance (Program Peduli 2016).

Various strategies were developed to create respect among the community. Various efforts were also taken to bring PEBM, the community, and the local government closer. One of the effort was a participatory writing of the history of Salamrejo Village that involved the youth from different faith backgrounds in the village. The strategy was used to unravel the history of Salamrejo community from a local perspective. The tracing the village's history by the writers had become an entrance for community interaction between Salamrejo community with the community of PEBM.

The interaction during the writing of the village's history has become a door to change the negative views of the Salamrejo community towards PEBM. Stories about the existing of historical sites such as wells, springs, historical sites (*petilasan*), spring (*sendang*), temples and ancient tombs around the village are no longer understood as PEBM occult rites but are seen as local wisdom that attached to the history of the village and the Salamrejo community itself.

According to the leader of PEBM community, Mbah Mangun, the process of tracing the history of the village also helped to remove the communist stigma against the PEBM community. Cultural strategies carried out through the writing of history book could unravel the stigma against PEBM. The book does not only heal the relationships within the community but become a historical source that is recognized by the village government.

Most of PEBM members fall under the category of poverty (Satunama 2018). The majority of PEBM members in Salamrejo rely on the agricultural sector by working as sharecroppers. Therefore, the strategy used by LKiS in assisting the community is an inclusive economic model that aims to empower the economy of PEBM community.

Starting with economic literacy activities for PEBM members, later the KUBE Cooperative (Joint Business Group) was formed, that is jointly managed by women and men. KUBE membership is not exclusive only to residents or PEBM members, but can also be joined by non-followers.

KUBE Cooperative collects internal funds that are jointly managed. The first effort undertaken by KUBE was the business drinking water refilling. This business then expanded with Aloe vera cultivation (Satunama 2018). Now the processed food is the icon of Salamrejo village. These products are presented at formal and informal events in the village.

This inclusive economic strategy helps to expand social acceptance for PEBM community, not only at the community level but also among government agencies in the District Government Organization (OPD). KUBE that was formed by PEBM community has also been registered to the Office of Cooperatives and Trade, and its members are included in Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) training at district level. KUBE members are expanded, not only from the PEBM followers but also from other residents who are not PEBM-followers.

The existence of KUBE helps to overcome the problem of access to capital that has been experienced by local belief followers. At the individual level, the existence of KUBE has become savings and loan facility for members. KUBE lends funds at low interest rate of only 0.5% per month so members can have access to capital to do business (Satunama 2018).

Both of these strategies, the historical tracing to write the village's history and economic empowerment have become the starting point for social inclusion of the PEBM community with Salamrejo village communities. Then,

the members of PEBM community began to be involved in development in the village of Salamrejo. In 2018, the Salamrejo Village Government began to develop tourism villages and saw the potential and contribution of PEBM in tourism and cultural sector. Therefore, in the same year, Pamungkas Salamrejo Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) was formed, which involved many PEBM communities (Satunama 2018).

The social inclusion of PEBM community with the Salamrejo village community is evident in several developments. First, the role of PEBM community in the preservation of cultural sites such as springs and ancient graves is beginning to be recognized. In addition, aloe vera processed products have become an important food product in developing tourism village. KUBE has not only had direct impact on the economic improvement of PEBM community but also had positive impact in increasing the potential of the village.

### **Women's Agency in the Social Inclusion of Local Belief Communities in Salamrejo Village**

One of the important things that came up in change that took place in Salamrejo Village was the involvement of women in the whole process (Satunama 2018). Women from PEBM community play an important role in social inclusion process.

One of the impacts of social exclusion in the women of local belief is the marginalized social relations in the community where they live. They had no meaningful activities and just stay at home. When they had any trading business, it usually did not successful enough. They did not have capital to develop their business, nor access to loans or business capital loans. They were also excluded from the community social activities in the village. Therefore, efforts were needed to increase the women's participation in the society.

Organizing of women is done to start productive economic activities. Training activities were held by LKiS for women in the form of training for developing cooperatives and KUBE, skills training, business management training, marketing, and bookkeeping. Through these capacity-building activities, the group women of local belief begun to be more confident and involved in public activities (Program Peduli 2017b).

Most of KUBE leaders are women from the PEBM community. Before the formation of KUBE, many of PEBM's women did not have activities and only worked at home. After joining and participating in training activities to learn new skills, women of PEBM community

can earn income from the sale of the Aloe vera products (Satunama 2018).

Through the activities at KUBE, women of PEBM community also make new friends and expand their network (Satunama 2018). Getting new friends from activities at KUBE has a special meaning for women of local belief and women who are family of local belief community. The previous experience of exclusion did not allow them to build friendships with people outside the community of local belief. The activities at KUBE become a space for social interaction between the women of local belief with other women outside PEBM community. Interaction in KUBE activities also provide space for society's acceptance towards the local belief community.

Empowerment can be seen as social inclusion and participatory development (Mishra and Tripathi 2011). Amartya Sen in *Development as Freedom* mentioned that any beneficial efforts to improve women's welfare would improve the women's agency creating the desired changes. According to Sen's view, the welfare and agency aspects of the movement and women's empowerment will substantially overlapping. Moreover, women's agencies are carried out in such a way as to lead to empowerment only in specific contexts or circumstances of women's autonomy.

Women's empowerment is determined, among others, by the existing options, choices, control, power, and the ability to make decisions that control one's life or resources, the ability to make strategic life choices and influence one's well-being. Naila Kabeer (2001) described empowerment as the expansion of one's ability to make strategic life choices that were not previously available for them (Mishra and Tripathi 2011). This is the concept that has been applied by the women of local belief in Salamrejo village.

Mishra and Tripathi (2011) view the importance of women's agency as an essential element in women's empowerment. According to Mishra and Tripathi, agency could happen when it produces fundamental changes in perception or "deep transformation" so that women can determine their personal interests and choices, and consider themselves not only to be capable but also entitled to make such choices. Kabeer (2001) describes the process as thinking outside the system and challenging the status quo.

In addition to KUBE, PEBM also initiated the formation of KEMALA, a catering business unit whose members are women in Salamrejo villange, not limited to female members of PEBM, but also from other religious

backgrounds. KEMALA's membership, which all are women, suggests a gender-based division of labor. Although the primary reason was because cooking was considered as women's activity, but it was emphasized that it did not originate from the teachings of PEBM. As explained by Mbah Mangun in an interview by Satunama "God does not distinguish between women and men, in the sense that men are not superior to women" (Satunama 2018).

Domestic activities that are attached to women, such as cooking and baking, has been used as an advocacy strategy that can encourage social inclusion. The gathering of women from different religious backgrounds in KEMALA's activities had contributed in stimulating interaction among women of community in Salamrejo village. The existence of KEMALA has also been proven to have encouraged women's empowerment of the local belief groupgroups and other religions, through economic advancement for its members.

Although come as a simple idea, economic initiatives such as KUBE and KEMALA have helped to improve the economies of its members. Women who have productive economic activities started to own their own business capital and use the income obtained to cover their personal and family needs. Due to the exclusion that they experienced, previously they did not have such economic capacity.

The initiative to form PEBM business unit groups such as KUBE and KEMALA could stimulate social interaction among different groups in Salamrejo village in creating social inclusion. Furthermore, the initiative has opened opportunities for women to gradually eliminate the existing gender barriers. Activities in both KUBE and KEMALA have allowed women to work together with other women to earn their own income. Although only in a small scale, the economic initiative approach has been to empower women in Salamrejo village. Socio-economic activities carried out by PEBM have succeeded in opening up interactions to reduce stigma and to build an inclusive society that values plurality. Women's involvement in KUBE, KEMALA, and other forums have shown the role of women as an agency for inclusion.

## Conclusion

The local belief community in Salamrejo Village is one among many vulnerable groups in Indonesia who experience social exclusion. They were excluded because of their beliefs and traditions are different from the majority at large. They experienced different

forms of exclusion ranging from stigmatization, barrier in obtaining basic services, and were not involved in the decision-making process and development process in their village. Their poor living condition became increasingly difficult because of the limited access to business capital and welfare assistance programs from the government. They also tend to be closed from outsiders.

Economic activity has been used as a social inclusion strategy by PEBM communities to address their exclusion. The strategy is inclusive because the membership of the cooperatives and business units that are formed also consist of people from beyond the local belief community, including those from different religions. The economic empowerment carried out then provided economic benefits for the local belief community and the wider community.

Women of PEBM community are organized through socio-economic activities. Various economic activities in the form of training and the formation of business units were carried out to empower women. These efforts aim at improving women's condition and women's position at the same time. Aside from practical needs of gender and gender strategic interests, the undertaken economic activities also become tool for inclusion within the society.

The experiences of women of local belief in Salamrejo village show that women's agencies can be built through economic empowerment. The empowerment gives power of agency for female of local belief to involve in economic activities in the community. If previously the PEBM community tended to isolate themselves and be isolated from the village, then the women's agency in economy could eventually become a door to encourage social inclusion between the community of local belief of *Kejawen* with the community in Salamrejo village.

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Jurnal Perempuan (JP) is a quarterly interdisciplinary publication in the English language that aims to circulate **original ideas in gender studies**. JP invites critical reflection on the theory and practice of feminism in the social, political, and economic context of Indonesian society. We are committed to exploring gender in its multiple forms and interrelationships.

The journal encourages practical, theoretically sound, and (when relevant) empirically rigorous manuscripts that address real-world implications of the gender gap in Indonesian contexts. Topics related to feminism can include (but are not limited to): sexuality, queer, trafficking, ecology, public policy, sustainability and environment, human and labor rights/ issues, governance, accountability and transparency, globalization, as well as ethics, and specific issues related to gender study, such as diversity, poverty, and education.

JP welcomes contributions from researchers, academia, activists, and practitioners involved in gender advocacy in any of the areas mentioned above. Manuscripts should be written so that they are comprehensible to an intelligent reader, avoiding jargon, formulas and extensive methodological treatises wherever possible. They should use examples and illustrations to highlight the ideas, concepts and practical implications of the ideas being presented. Feminist theory is important and necessary; but theory — with the empirical research and conceptual work that supports theory — needs to be balanced by integration into practices to stand the tests of time and usefulness. We want the journal to be read as much by stakeholders as by academics seeking sound research and scholarship in women's study.

JP appears annually and the contents of each issue include: editorials, peer-reviewed papers by leading writers; reviews, short stories, and poetry. A key feature of the journal is appreciation of the value of literature, fiction, and the visual narrative (works of art, such as paintings and drawings) in the study of women's issues

### Submissions

To discuss ideas for contributions, please contact the Chief Editor: Anita Dhewy via [anitadhewy@jurnalperempuan.com](mailto:anitadhewy@jurnalperempuan.com). Research papers should be between 5000-10000 words. Please make sure to include in your submission pack an **abstract outlining the title, purpose, methodology and main findings**. It is worth considering that, as your paper will be located and read online, the quality of your abstract will determine whether readers go on to access your full paper. We recommend you place particular focus on the impact of your research on further research, practice or society. What does your paper contribute? In addition, please provide up to **six descriptive keywords**.

### Formatting your paper

**Headings** should be short and in bold text, with a clear and consistent hierarchy. Please identify **Notes or Endnotes** with consecutive numbers, enclosed in square brackets and listed at the end of the article. **Figures** and other images should be submitted as .jpeg (.jpg) or .tif files of a high quality. Please number them consecutively with Arabic numerals and mark their intended location within the body of the text clearly. If images are not the original work of the author, it is the author's responsibility to obtain written consent from the copyright holder before using them. Authors will be asked to confirm the status of images, tables and figures in the journal submission pack. Images which are neither the authors' own work, nor are accompanied by the necessary permission, will not be published.

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