

Implementation of Functional Literacy Education by Participatory Learning as Effort of Lifelong Learning

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this present research was to describe and analyze the implementation of functional literacy education by using participative learning for rural society as an effort of lifelong learning. Functional literacy education was implemented to develop basic literacy skill which integrated by functional life skill oriented to daily life and learning environment. The present research used qualitative approach. This research was conducted in Semarang district with research subject were learning society, tutor, and literacy organizer. Data collecting method used observation, deep interview, and documentation. Data analysis used qualitative descriptive including reducing data, presenting data, and making conclusion. The results of present research were: 1) Lifelong acceleration learning effort through implementation of functional literacy education was conducted by socialization, planning, and organizing stage which involved related people, 2) Functional literacy education by using participative learning including reading, writing, calculating, speaking, and listening were integrated by life skills and local potentials were proved to be able to increase learning motivation, family economic, and life quality of learning society, 3) the effects functional literacy learning as an effort to lifelong learning for rural society including the developing of the effort as business practice and empowering learning society with life skills toward independence.

Keywords: Functional Literacy; Education Participatory; Lifelong Learning.

1 INTRODUCTION

Functional learnin is planned to decrease illiteracy, rate of illiteracy, and unknowledgeable of basic education. Illiteracy problem is important to be concerned knowing that in up to international world it becomes one of the important aspects of the building in a country, measured by the rate of illiteracy. Literacy is a requirement for all of the people and in all age. Since early age, school age, and adult need literacy education as a facility to self-developing and society development.

The term literacy from UNESCO (2003) is literacy is a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their knowledge and potential; pursue and achieve their goals, and participate fully in society. Literacy is human right, personal empowering tool, and facility for society development. Literacy is very important to fight against poverty, reduce children mortality,

limit population growth, achieve gender equality, and ensure continual development. Since 2000, Indonesia has concentrated on the rapid fighting against illiteracy. Literacy in Indonesia is understood as the foundation of learning to life and form learning society.

UNESCO defines literacy skill or literacy as someone's skill to read and write simple sentences which are needed in daily life. Someone is capable in functional literacy if he can engage in activity uses literacy skill as a requirement of effective function group and as a foundation for himself to increase reading, writing, listening, speaking, and calculating skill. The important reasons are strengthen by recent report from The Organization for Economic Cooperation and development (OECD) launched on 8th of October 2013 in Brussels which revealed several interesting findings. Those findings were adult people with sufficient literacy level had high opportunity in world of work, they were active in democracy and volunteering activities, and they had better health level and high salary. Literacy is a basic need that has the power to rural society development in developing countries. Hunter (2008) states that literacy skill has a correlation with basic skills that is very important to several activities in daily life.

Illiteracy as a basic problem of poverty and society's low powered, is one of the reasons of unevenly education. Education for all empowers and encourages developing countries to do and put effort into keep their commitment in giving opportunity for each citizen to lifelong study. The effort to fight against illiteracy, literacy education was held. This program was considered to be strategic that thoroughly campaigned by implementing functional literacy education as a lifelong learning acceleration.

In rural society, illiteracy is very important to be concerned because it is one of the aspects of development for the society itself, measured by the illiteracy rate. Rural people with illiteracy work as farmers, laborers, fisherman, and poor people that have low salary. They have fallen behind knowledge, skill, and mental toward modernity and development. Because of the low knowledge, they have difficulty in getting access of information and communication that are important to open the world that they should get because they do not have literacy skill. The rapid rural society development in Indonesia demand commitment to learn, follow, and anticipate development.

Based on the residence, rural society has higher illiteracy level. This condition is consistent for all ages. From age perspective, the higher level is 25 years old and beyond. Women rural people from 25 years old and beyond are the highest illiteracy component. Illiteracy in rural society is related to poverty. The effort to push the amount of poor people is getting harder because they have the lowest level I having knowledge and skill to help them. Therefore, special policy is needed directly for rural society with strategy directed to rural area by finding out the reason of poverty, either structural or cultural, or because the physical environment condition. Data of illiteracy people in Semarang district from Susenas 2013 showed that the percentage of 15 years old and beyond was 9.55%. The high illiteracy was in 15 years old and beyond

group that influenced by 45-49 years old group. The percentage of 45-49 years old group who had illiteracy was 7.78% (BPS Jateng, 2013:10).

Ziegler and Davis (2008) explain the condition of rural adult literacy in society context. Economic, education, and resource condition is far behind urban society. To face this condition continual learning opportunity is needed a development strategy. Functional literacy education development refers to people's independence; it becomes special pressure that often be its standard and basic principle. Sumardi's research (2009) concludes that social learning' literacy need is learning that involves them based on their daily life and material which can be used in work and daily life. That explanation shows how the implementation of functional literacy education by using participative learning as an effort of lifelong learning for rural society in Semarang district.

The present research aims to describe the implementation of functional literacy education for rural society, the process of functional literacy education by using participative learning, and the effects of functional literacy education as an effort of lifelong learning for rural society in Semarang district.

2 METHODS

The present research was qualitative descriptive research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2005). This research described the implementation of functional literacy education for rural society by using participative learning in functional literacy learning groups in Semarang district. Subject of this research was purposively chosen based on the purpose of the research. Subjects were 47 students, 4 tutors, and 3 organizers. The average age of students was 25-55 years old. The occupations had by students were farmers, green grocery sellers, housekeepers, and food sellers.

The instrument and technique used to collect data was interview, observation, and documentation. Data collecting method was used by analyzing data from interview, observation, and documentation by using qualitative descriptive technique. Data collecting technique was obtained directly from subjects. Primary data including related places and events obtained from interview, observation, and focus group discussion by involving experts, practitioners, and researchers. Secondary data related to the amount of students, and the result associated by what have been conducted. To ensure the validity, data source triangulation was used. Data analyzing technique used interactive analysis model that had three components; reducing data, presenting data, and making conclusion. Reducing data is selection process, focusing, simplification, and abstracting crude data in field record. From field data the result of interview and secondary data made into transcript of report then it was reduced and the prominent data was chosen. Presenting data is information from organization ensemble that research conclusion probably made. In this case, presenting data consisted of qualitatively description. Making conclusion is data organizing that was collected so it could be made into a conclusion.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Results

The present research was conducted to students, tutors, and organizers of functional literacy education in Ngudi Kaweruh learning group located in Candigaron village, kecamatan Sumowono, and Warung Pasinaon learning group located in Bergas Lor village, Bergas subdistrict, Semarang district. Illiteracy issue of rural society in Semarang district was related to the low education level, society's incapability to get higher education, as a result of poverty, and the high of society's illiteracy.

The implementation of this functional literacy education was an effort of lifelong learning implemented by socialization, planning, and organizing stage that involve related people. Socialization stage was given to organizers, tutors, and students. The effort of implementing functional literacy was done in order to make this functional literacy understandable and acceptable for target society, especially organizers and tutors. This stage got support and motivation form village government, socialites, and other stake holder. This functional literacy preparation involved all people and it was responsible for the continuance of functional literacy.

In planning stage, all of the components and stake holder discussed together and held in village hall. This planning stage begun by identifying needs. It was started by village officials collected data of people who could read, write, and calculate. Then they attempted to know people's willingness in following the learning activity. Functional literacy education learning given to rural society was planned base on problem analysis result, the needs were priority that was agreed, and determined facility and infrastructure needed to support learning purposes.

Organizing stage begun by arranging the organizer structure of functional literacy. Organizing in doing functional literacy has the chief of organizer, secretary, and administrators. The reason of determining the structure was based on needs to make work coordination easier in functional literacy education. Learning process in each group had tutor who taught basic literacy and tutor who taught life skills and capabilities as technical informants.

Learning strategies of functional literacy learning was done by using participative learning including planning, implementation, and evaluation. Planning stage started by identifying needs. Learning was conducted in tutor's house for 2 times a week and 2 hours in every meeting. Implementation stage was started by doing socialization and giving information about material which would be studied. The first step tutor prepared administration including students' attendance list, lesson plans, and evaluation system. Learning materials were: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and calculating and they were done by integrating functional skills. Determination of learning materials based on the result of identifying learning needs. In formulating purposes of learning education, it referred to latticework which had been composed by

government according to Standar Kompetensi Keaksaraan (SKK).

Evaluation stage was done to some aspects; reading, writing, calculating, speaking, and listening which was integrated by skills and themes of daily life. Score data of evaluating students' test result then it evaluated qualitatively based on table of quality standard with score 50-60 was poor, 61-70 was moderate, 71-80 was sufficient, 81-90 was good, 91-100 was excellent. When the learning process ended all of students got learning certificate based on evaluation result.

Supportive factors of literacy education including: support and commitment from village government, related institute and socialite's role, students' interest, and students' motivation in following learning activity. This functional literacy education got full support from village government. It was proved when students' recruitment the village officials and tutors made a call to houses to collect data and communicate about the important of functional literacy education and ask their willingness to learn literacy. It was able to increase their interest and motivation in following the learning activity.

The effects of literacy education in economic could be seen from the increasing of salary and business activity had by students. Business had after literacy education was by making snacks which had been taught in literacy learning. The functional in this literacy learning was to make business practices could be applied in daily life. Although the increasing of salary was not rally high but there was an increasing before and after following the functional literacy education.

Empowering students' economy was succeed shown by; 1) the intensity of students' presences frequency and their responses toward learning materials, 2) students could express new ideas to improve the learning, 3) the increasing of students' participation in their businesses, and 4) the increasing of students' awareness toward the increasing of life quality. Functional literacy as a tool to empower students' economy was better seen by the implementing and the responsible of all related components.

Learning in skill integrated functional literacy education was proved capable to increase students' economy so their life degrees increased. It can be seen by various business opportunities had by students after following functional literacy education. The increasing of economic toward life changing effects as an lifelong learning effort including; 1) they had various skills to be developed, 2) business in making snacks from local materials, 3) various skills to make crafts which was very potential to be developed, 4) work groups that turned garbage into fertilizer were developed, 5) business in turning secondhand things into crafts were developed, and 6) making traditional foods to be specific local foods.

Various businesses done faced some problems; education level and students' knowledge which relatively low and the kind of skills which were still simple. The next problem was almost students in developing small business process were still focused on financial capital so they needed financiers to give financial capital to support their businesses. This functional

literacy education was non-formal education which was expected to empower students with life skills so they had life skills and they became independence and able to do business.

3.2 Discussion

Functional literacy education was an approach for program of fighting illiteracy which focused on from, by, and for process to students by using education strategies through speaking, listening, reading, and calculating. Literacy aimed to develop skills in hope that they could use it to solve problems in daily life and the life around them. Functional literacy education emphasized to a students' skill to solve new condition created by environment, so they could have functional skill that was useful from them and others. Wider, functional literacy tried to build society through changing in individual level and society with the existence of similarity, opportunity, and global understanding.

Basically, functional literacy education was concept development of literacy education which had been meant by society. Nonetheless, society had practiced the literacy education concept in their environments. Rural society who were unfortunate which was given and maintained, were much closed to social process, low powered, poverty, and policy that less in favor of them caused the marginality in education. As a result, there were obstacles in accessing education because low powered, poverty, geographic, gender, and language. The definition of various causes was important so it could make maximal intervention and success to fight marginality in education.

Lifelong learning was all of the learning process and learning that aimed to increase knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that useful for personal or society including work environment (Wilson, 2001). Lifelong learning in its implementation to build unity of staging education, as totality from various learning activities held in family environment, school, and social life. In social activity context, that if all of life activities in society become vehicle for everyone, then there will be rapid life change to be better.

According to Hunter (1988) there are three basic categories about the definition of literacy that each category is based on different assumption from literacy's role of social life, they are: 1) literacy as a set on basic skills, abilities, and competencies, 2) literacy as the necessity foundation of higher quality of life, and 3) literacy as a reflection of political and structural realities. These ideologies of literacy philosophy clearly give attention to literacy form in local culture. Philosophy from ideologies of literacy model that functional literacy education needs to be thought to ensure that illiteracy eradication should be relevant and appropriate with views of life and culture. That is why multi literacy education is needed by society.

The opinion above is strengthened by Baynham (1995) states that basically literacy is ideological. Therefore, literacy is not neutral; it depends on decision as something that is not neutral so literacy education should consider

factors that influence the literacy. Literacy from UNESCO definition (2003) about literacy “Literacy is as a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their knowledge and potential, pursue and achieve their goals, and participate fully in society.

Therefore, functional literacy education will be appropriate if it participation-based society. Referring to that reason, functional literacy education by using participative learning was more focused on rural society’s needs and on the other hand it also focused on motivation development, modernity, vocational skill, and skills related to works in social life. Therefore, rural society was expected to have several skills that would be capital to develop their lives by doing independence business to get beneficial to make them better in economic, social, or culture aspect.

Lifelong learning aimed to create life learning and form learning society. According to Jarvis (2007) lifelong learning is combination process in someone’s whole life in body, thought, social experience situation, idea, and then they are transformed cognitively, affectively, and practically and integrated into life biography that produces continual change and experience.

Lifelong learning implementation should be developed and directed in order to be able to encourage individuals learn actively in every chance, initiative in finding their own learning sources. The approach used in lifelong learning process was thematic and contextual approach, developed patter and system technology- based. Lifelong learning content consisted of life skills content, could increase individual’s awareness in participating development activity in their society.

The implementation of lifelong learning in Indonesia considers 2 strategic purposes, they are: 1) increasing quality and affectivity of education system, 2) facilitating all accesses toward education system. Carry out growth and development of society to move forward. The implementation affects students’ independences.

Participation becomes important component to raise independence and empowering process Craig and Mayo, (1995), so involved society will be more confident, self-respecting, and knowledgeable to develop new skill. Participative learning is a set of events in learning process which involve students to be active in learning activity begins with planning, implementing, and evaluating (Knowles, 1990; Sudjana, 2005)

The purpose which is going to be achieved is to form individual and society to be independence. Independence is a condition had by society marked by capabilities to think, decide and do something that considered as proper things to solve problems faced by using society’s skills. Adults as students had preferences of having learning orientation that focused on solving problems faced by them (problem centered orientation). It was because learning for some adults was a need to face problems in their daily lives, especially related to social function and role of adults. It caused implication toward learning materials for adults that that materials should be practice and applicable in daily life.

Related to that, research about participative learning had been conducted by Wen Ma (2008) with the result about participative learning used to increase students' skills in learning literacy competency to comprehend text and get academic knowledge. Duze (2010) described the result of his research about influence of participative learning toward students' achievement and attitude. In other hand, Alam and Ihsan (2012) also conducted research on participative learning approach in developing rural society, aimed to encourage them and ensure them to participate maximally in increasing social economy condition.

Based on previous researches it can be concluded that participated learning aimed to participate students actively in learning. Sudjana (2005: 155) stated that students' participation was formed in three learning activity stages those were program planning, program implementation, and program evaluation. According to Kim, Jeong, and Kang in their research (2001) described that participative learning divided into three stages: 1) listening through forum, 2) group discussion by giving opinion, and 3) doing in implementation of chosen strategy. Mundir (2011) in his research stated about participative learning stages they were togetherness between teachers and students in transforming knowledge that happened because of learning together, depending positively, and the attitude of giving and receiving.

Sudjana (2005) stated about participative learning in detail. Participation in planning stage was students' involvement in identifying learning needs, problems and problems' priorities, sources or potentials provided and probability of obstacles in learning. Students' participation in planning stage including identifying learning needs, sources provided and probability of obstacles that would be faced in learning activity, arranging priority needs, formulating learning purposes, and determining learning programs.

The next participation was students' involvement in formulating learning purposes. Learning purposes was statement related to learning that would be achieved by students through learning activity. Those results were knowledge, skills, and values which became part of students' lives. Participation in implementing learning program was students' involvement in creating conducive climate to learn. It covered first, students' discipline marked by regularity of presence in every learning activity. Second, the development of the relationship between students and other students and tutors so there would be an opened relationship between people, intimacy, directed, appreciation, helping each other, and learning. Third, interaction in learning activity between students and teachers was done by horizontal relationship. Fourth, the pressure of learning activity that students' role would be more active in learning, not in tutors who more focused on teaching learning. In this stage learning focused on students, not tutors. Learning materials arrangement and learning steps determination were done by students along with tutors.

Participation in evaluation stage was important. It was done to accumulate, process, and present data or information which could be used as

opinion in making a decision. Besides, learning evaluation covered evaluation toward process, result, and effect of learning. Evaluation toward result of learning was to find out the change of behavior done by students after following learning program. Evaluation toward effect of learning was to find out the change of life after applying the learning.

Participative learning used in functional literacy learning was to increase conventional learning to be more effective learning. The effectiveness of learning needed to be increased so functional literacy learning students could optimize their potentials so learning purposes would be achieved through thinking activity and engaging together in learning. Participative learning promised effective results. Rogers (1994: 167) stated: we have seen that, for learning to be active, the students participants I our group need to be active: they must be fully involved in learning process. Then Rogers (1994) gave reason that participative learning was really needed because learning was students' active process, lifelong learning and learning was an effort of freedom. Participative learning psychologically and sociologically meant giving opportunity to fulfill self-actualization need, learned to be participated would develop self-leadership, self-directed learning and self-efficacy.

The learning stages were: 1) Resuscitation and motivate students, 2) students' participation in identifying problem of needs, interest, and local potential, 3) students' participation in arranging learning purposes, 4) students' participation in arranging learning programs, 5) students' participation in implementing learning activity, 6) students' participation in evaluating process and result of learning.

Functional literacy education divided into three stages; basic literacy, middle literacy, and independence literacy (Direktorat Dikmas, 2005). Basic literacy focused on learning needs for each individual that were not able to read, write, and calculate in basic level. Middle stage gave opportunity to develop their functional skills and to increase their literacy competency based on daily life. In independence literacy stage to focused on how to help students strengthen and develop their functional literacy skill, so they could develop their life level.

The components in empowering economic through functional literacy education including: 1) support form stake holder to do functional literacy program, 2) motivation in processing that was comprehensive as an effort in empowering economy through functional literacy. Besides, from the social view, functional literacy could increase intimacy between students, make connection between functional literacy students in starting business, make business group based on similarity of business, develop creativity in creating products to be interesting for customers based on market's desire and potential calculation, develop expansion by looking for stake holder and involving local businessman so it would strengthen financial capital and market for poor women in rural area.

The main problem of low powered in rural society caused by government who still dominated to literacy education through programs that

should be given to society. The problems appeared in implementing literacy education was the applied literacy learning was still limited in single literacy those were reading, writing, and calculating. As a result, rural society who still had illiteracy actually could not reach standard of literacy competency and they had been capable yet to use their literacy after learning and tended to be illiterate again.

Illiteracy was not only individual's or society's incapability problem in reading and writing letter, but widely it was related to incapability in understanding, analyzing, and solving problem in life. Illiteracy eradication program was not only technically, but it was also related to problem of changing awareness and thoughts and acts to make the change. Indonesia committed to reduce illiteracy since the beginning of Independence Day until now by using various policies through Gerakan Nasional Pemberantasan Buta Aksara. That program now is not only given to make illiterate people to be able to read, write, and calculate but also it is more directed and integrated as an applicative and innovative program that give and empower rural society. Therefore, inventorying rural potential and resource, and documenting it, need mapping and social analyzing tool and the documentation which can be adaptively understood as a lifelong learning effort. Besides, by using media that can be accessed and understood by rural society it will be easy to empower rural society. The implementation of functional literacy education was done by using literacy skill in daily life. Societies were not only capable in basic literacy but also applied it and get the benefits to increase their life level both materially and physically.

4 CONCLUSION

Functional literacy education learning was started by early preparation before learning process by doing socialization and giving information about material which would be learned. Functional literacy learning of rural society in learning group at Semarang district including: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and calculating which were integrated to life skills. In implementing that learning as a lifelong learning effort, it was important to pay attention on prerequisite and procedure of program implementation. Thus, the effectiveness of functional literacy learning program was expected to achieve the goals. Maintaining and increasing skill program combined with vocational education worked effectively.

The implementation of functional literacy education needed cooperation connection development with others to support learning program and develop collective business. That connection, beside that it make implementation of functional literacy learning easier, it was also needed to increase independence because it opened wider access toward institutions or people who have not been accessed yet. The act of implementing functional literacy education was needed to keep the continuance and form students' independence in developing activities after functional literacy so the skills

and capabilities which were received could be more improved. Besides, accompaniment was needed until students considered having skills to continue and make them independence in learning program.

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