

# Social Inclusion for Older People Through Library Services

Marwiyah

*Library and Information Science Department,  
Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University  
Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
marwiyah.prabowo@yahoo.com*

**Abstract**—Social inclusion becomes a global issue as people’s awareness of equality increases. The growth of international interest to inclusion is a result of globalization, liberalization, and democratization. United Nation promotes the issue on inclusion through the agenda of 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) consisting of 17 goals. Goal 10 states the need to authorize and raise the social, economic and political inclusion of all, without considering age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. This aim calls people to actively participate and prepare agenda to implement that goal. One of key issues we may address is about older people. Older people are at risk of being in social exclusion due to their decreasing ability to be more actively involved in social activities for some reasons, such as health problem. In some cases, older people do not either have adequate access for various information (Digital divide). This limited information access may lead to the misunderstanding the global issues they receive and even worsen their quality of life. On the other hand, they have opportunity to be active aging persons when they have good quality of life. This study focused on social inclusion of older people through library services. It made of the library method by investigating some documents related to the social inclusion and the role of library for the community. The data were qualitatively analyzed to find the basic concepts or insights to answer research problem. The study revealed that the library has a mandate to serve people with providing information access regardless of religion, language, race, gender, disability and age. The library played an important role by inviting older people to participate actively in social spaces developed by the library. The library provides collections, services and facilities for all types of users as regulated in standards developed by library associations.

**Keywords**— social inclusion, library services, older people, inclusive library

## I. INTRODUCTION

Issues on inclusiveness become the key agenda either in a or social educational life. Therefore, social inclusion has developed in most countries. United Nation promotes social inclusion as a part of the global goals through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). There are 17 goals to achieve and some goals refer to building inclusion environment that is stated in Goals 8, 10, 11, and 16 [1]. Goal 8 is to encourage inclusive and continued increase with job creation. Goal 10 is to encourage the social, economic and

political inclusion of all, without considering age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. Goal 11 is to make places where people live inclusive, safe, flexible and sustainable; and Goal 16 aims to encourage peaceful and inclusive societies as well as inclusive institutions. The notion of inclusion forces people to identify what social inclusion is and how to achieve and implement this concept in the society. The basic concept of inclusion as stated in UNESCO [2] is leaving no one behind which means that everyone has equal right in the social life. This becomes the foundation for promoting inclusiveness in society and embracing marginalized community such as poor community, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged people. These groups of people are often at risk of exclusion and therefore they have a poor quality of life.

Older people are one of the elements in a community that need to be recognized since they have potential roles in the community building. They are mostly also at risk of social exclusion, as a result of rural disadvantages [3]. In Indonesia the number of older people grows significantly. According to the data of the 2014 population census, there were 18,74 million older people that occupy 7,61 percent of the total population [4]. Older people also often have to deal with economic, social and health problems that may affect their quality of life. For example, a retiree person will have devastating condition since he has to adapt a new phase of life from a worker to a non-worker. Such phase of life has impact on his economic life that in turn will bring about psychological and health problems. In some cases, older people will have a dependency on others, or more extremely be trapped in a radical ideology which can be a burden for the family and in the big scale for the country or state [5]. On the other hand, older people have potential as an active aging persons, like Mahathir Muhammad who was elected as a president at his age of 90s of his age. This shows that aging cannot prevent older people to take important role in politics and other fields. Social inclusion then becomes the key effort to enable them more accepted and generate active aging persons. Silver [5] states that social inclusion is multi-dimensional, relational process of increasing opportunities for social participation, enhancing capabilities to fulfil normatively prescribed social roles, broadening social ties of respect and recognition, and at the

collective level, enhancing social bonds, cohesion, integration, or solidarity.

Therefore, social inclusion and its counterpart, social exclusion, are noted as critical global policy concepts in relation to older people, with policies based on the goal of social inclusion in building social cohesion and integration in aging communities [3]. An Information or publication sharing is one of ways to eliminate a sense of exclusion (DESA, 2009), and it can be a tool to educate and enlighten older people. This may take happen in a library or other social institutions. Library as an institution that provides various types of information for its user may take important part to educate older people. It has a mandate to serve people through providing information access for the community regardless of religion, language, race, gender, disability and age [6]. It also has an important role in building a learning society and promote an inclusive society through its collections and services. This paper will explore the library roles in promoting the social inclusion for older people, and what effort the library may conduct to achieve its goal to create inclusive society.

## II. METHODS

This paper used a qualitative approach by applying the library method. Some documents related to the social inclusion and the role of library for the community were gathered to find the basic theory as a foundation to analyze the focus of the research problem. The contents then were analyzed to cope with the research problems and to identify the alternative solutions.

## III. THEORECAL FRAMEWORK

### A. Social Inclusion

The term “social inclusion” is not a new concept because in the nineteenth century Max Weber, a sociologist, used the term “social cohesion” to counterpart the term “social exclusion.” Social exclusion pertains to restriction of access to the opportunities and limitation [7]. Another similar concept was established in 1995 during The World Summit for Social Development in Denmark namely *social integration* [8]. The concept aimed to generate an inclusive society which mean a society for all as one of the key goals of the social development. Promoting social integration then can be developed through encouraging inclusive societies that are firm, secure, just, lenient, and appreciate the differences, equality of opportunity and partake of all people, including underprivileged and prone groups and persons [8]. The concept has similar meaning to the recent use of social inclusion, the act of making all groups of people within a society to feel valued and important [9]. Furthermore, it is explained that social inclusion is related to provision of certain right to all individuals and groups in society such as employment, adequate housing, health care, education, training, etc. Social inclusion then can be related to a variety of areas of social groupings that includes a demographic differentiation with the respect to socio-economic status, culture and primary, religion, geography (including those in regional, rural and/or remote areas), gender

and sexual orientation, age (including youth and senior groups), health (including physical and mental disabilities), unemployment, homelessness and incarceration [7]. This means that social inclusion refers to an effort to make everyone involved and participated in social activities regardless of gender, age, religion, geography, language, ethnic or race in order to make an inclusive society. In the long run, it will empower the society to be well-informed people that are the basic element to create democratic society.

### B. Understanding Senior/Older People Group

The Indonesian regulation no. 13 year 1998, chapter 1 article 1 no 2 define the older or senior people as those who are at his age of 60 and above. World Health Organization (WHO) more specifically divides older people into four groups: middle age (45-59 years old), elderly (60-74 years old), old (75-90 years old) and very old (90 years old) with their own specific characters. In certain circumstances, older people become more religious that they view meaning of their life, and value interaction between the nature and themselves. But in some cases, turning to elderly age, they face the degenerating of physical, psychological, and social functions. This leads them to have problems related to their health and psychology that in turn will give impact on their economic and social activities [5]. As people grow older, there is a degenerative process that make them be at risk of having degenerative diseases such as stroke, diabetes mellitus, dementia and Alzheimer [10]. In addition, a research in United Kingdom showed that older people have five area of needs, such associal security benefits and entitlement, health, housing, residential and nursing home care and how to pay for it, and support services for people at home [11]. In short, older people will be at risk of having economic, social and health problems that generate a poor quality of life.

Aging process also has impact on their psychological aspects, such as declining intellectual function related to their perception, cognitive ability, memory and learning that cause difficulty in the personal and social interaction [12]. At this disadvantaged level, the dependency of older people on others increases and makes them to be excluded from social activities. On another hand, social activities and interaction may help stimulate cognitive function because the social bound consisting of maintaining social relationship and active participation in social activities may prevent the cognitive degeneration of older people [13]. This means that social inclusion can be a way to help older people improve their quality of life.

### C. Library and social inclusion

Library has an important role in promoting the social inclusion with its function as an institution to implement education for all. At the beginning, the development of public libraries was based on the idea that libraries must be operated by the people for the people and be open to all regardless of their occupation, creed, class, or race. Everyone should be offered the opportunity, through the library, to continue to educate themselves, to develop their creative abilities, to aid in the advancement of knowledge, and to use their leisure time to

promote personal happiness and social well-being [14]. It is also described in the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) manifesto [6], that the purpose of the library includes six key areas:

1) Education

In an greater complicate society people will have to develop new skills at several different stages of their life that can be performed either in the formal or informal education. The public library has an important role in assisting this process through providing sources in the suitable media to assist formal and informal learning processes.

2) Information

The public library is the local centre for information and it has a mandate to make all kinds of knowledge and information available to its users

3) Personal development

Relating to this purpose, the public library provides opportunities for the personal creative development in which they need the access the knowledge and works of the imagination, dissimilar media, an abundant and different store of knowledge and creative achievement,

4) Producing and fortifying children's reading habits from an early age

5) Cultural development

Public library has an important role to provide the community with a focus on the cultural and artistic development and to help form and assist the community's cultural identity of. Therefore materials in the languages spoken and read in the local community, and support cultural traditions should be acquired by public libraries

6) The social role of the public library

The public library has a significant role as a public area and meeting point. This is specifically important in communities where there are few areas for people to meet. This is also important for certain groups of people who may need a specific room to discuss or develop activities such as storytelling.

The important role of the public library can bring economic and social benefits to the individuals and community. Since it is an inclusive institution, all people have equal access to its services and collections in order to develop their own lives. In terms of inclusive services, IFLA and other library associations, such as American Library Association (ALA) develop guideline for providing library services for users with special needs, and older people. The guideline regulates the implementation of services that include specific area [15] as follows:

- 1) Acquiring and incorporating current data about the older population into designing and budgeting.
- 2) Making sure that the particular necessity and interests of senior citizens are shown in the library's collections, programs, and services.
- 3) Ensuring the safety and comfort of library's collections and facilities, to attract senior citizens.

- 4) Promoting library as centre of information services to senior citizens.
- 5) Designing library programme that focuses on senior citizens.
- 6) Helping out senior citizens who are unable to visit the library
- 7) Training the library's staff to give polite and respectful services to senior citizens..

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Related to the social inclusion, the equal access to the public information plays an important role in creating an inclusive society. Shared public information and increased accessibility of the community's activities will remove a feeling of exclusion. The mass media can be an efficient way to educate and inform society [8]. With an adequate information, members of a society will have opportunity to participate in community activities and enable them to be more well-informed people. The information that pertains to the society should be made available to all. A public library as an institution that provides information has essential roles to promote the social inclusion for older people by addressing their need. It was mentioned in ALA guideline the library should respond special needs and interest of older people through providing information services. There are two main areas the library can implement to serve them, library collections and services.

##### A. Library Collections

As information has a power to empower people, appropriate library collections become very important. Older people dealing with problems such as economic, psychology and mainly health need information to help solve those problems. Library collections should cover subjects that they needed to cope with their general problems. Books about health problem will help them to get information *on how to deal with degenerative diseases (Alzheimer, dementia, diabetes mellitus, etc.)*. *Religious or spiritual and entertaining books, for example, novels may help them to cope with psychological problems.* They also need fact news to make them keep updated with current trends. News can be good sources to find information they need such as health, housing and work opportunities. Specific types of collection may need to be acquired in response to their certain condition. Some older people that have visual impairment require the library to provide them with large print books and newspaper. Frequently used books by older people should be placed in a reachable space as mentioned in ALA guideline [15].

##### B. Library Services

In offering services, the library needs supporting elements. There are two key points to provide older people with library services. supporting facilities and library programming or activities. Accessible space for them is the first element to consider since this will attract them to visit and access the library. This is related to the physical access such as the availability of an elevator to reach high building. The library also should have at least one-wheel chair for the public use.



Supporting facilities are also important to facilitate them to easily access library collections, such as computer equipped with large type software. Another important thing is the availability of *senior space* [15]. This space enables them to meet and socialize with others. It is important for them to share their experience and build relationship in order to support each other. This social relationship will prevent their cognitive degeneration [16].

The second element of the library service is designing a library program for senior people. Some activities may suit them can be offered as follows:

- 1) Activities to encourage older people independency, for example, teaching information literacy. Teaching them how to identify information need, how to find credible information resources and how to locate and use information properly is important since this is a basic skill to build critical thinking that enable them to gather and use reliable information.
- 2) Designing the training of the computer and Internet use. Abundance information is now available on the web that can be easily accessed by people around the world. However, it could be uneasy for older people, primarily those who live in a rural area to access because they do not have the ability to use the information and communication technology. Therefore, the library should assist them how to use the computer and internet.
- 3) Displays message against ageism or stereotypes on older people in order to encourage them to be active aging persons. There is a general negative view spread in the community that being old age means in 'decline and loss condition. The library has responsibility to shift the negative view toward a more positive 'competence-thinking.
- 4) Giving opportunity for older people to be volunteers in libraries. By being volunteer workers, they will get benefits, such as greater well-being, sense of purpose, and social integration [16].

Information Literacy programs become important subjects to be delivered to older people. Innovative programs have been developed in some countries, For example, Southern Louisiana Sims Memorial Libraries in 2010 offer Senior CHAT (Consumer Health Awareness) program for senior people [17]. This program aims to help senior citizens learn to access online health information by teaching them how to use a computer. The library taught older people a basic computer skill, a health information literacy, and the creation of personal health profile. The goal of the program is to improve health literacy so as to ultimately improve health outcomes.

In United Kingdom specific service was delivered for people who are household [11]. This service was primarily provided for older people who unable to leave their home. In this case, the library provided outreach service in which librarians visit home care to deliver collections and other services for older people. The Christchurch City Libraries (New Zealand) also has similar services through Outreach Division. Housebound Librarian visits the customer and gathers information related to reading preferences, how often they would like the service, how many items and in which format they require. The librarian then

will choose library collections based on users' preferences, and volunteer drivers deliver those items to housebound users. They also have personalized Storyline Service for older people for users who suffer from difficulty in reading print or holding a book.

Human resource is an essential component to implement programs for older people. They should be able to understand how to serve all types of older people and to identify their needs in order to design appropriate services for them. Another important point is cooperating with other institutions that have great concern on aging issues, such as local area agencies on aging, senior nutrition programs, senior volunteer programs, and others in the aging service provider network by advertising their service and making their publications and other information more readily accessible.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Social inclusion is a key concept that promotes equal access for all people, including older people. As the number older people grow, it is important to help them to have better quality of life in order to make them independent persons. Social inclusion as one of ways to enrich and enlighten older people can be applied in multi-sectors and one of this is the library. The library as a heart of the community can take important action by inviting them to participate actively in social space developed by the library. The library provides collections, services and facilities for all types of users as regulated in standards developed by Library Association like IFLA and ALA.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Anonymous, "UNESCO moving forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development," *Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, 2017.
- [2] J. Warburton, S. Cowan, R. Winterton, and S. Hodgkins, "Building Social Inclusion for Rural Older People Using Information and Communication Technologies: Perspectives of Rural Practitioners," *Australian Social Work*, vol. 67, no. 4, pp. 479–494, Oct. 2014.
- [3] Anonymous, "Jokowi Bagi Kartu KIP KIS dan KKS Pada Penyandang Disabilitas," *Tribunnews.com*, 27-May-2015. <http://www.tribunnews.com/>
- [4] A. Santika, "Lanjut Usia dalam Perspektif Hukum dan HAM. Buletin Jendela Data dan Informasi Kementerian Kesehatan RI, Semester 1 -
- [5] Hillary Silver, "The context of social inclusion. DESA Working Paper No. 144 ST/ESA/2015/DWP/144. Department of Economic and Social Affairs," 2015.
- [6] K. G. Saur, *The public library service: IFLA. UNESCO Guidelines for development*. Germany: Munich, 2001.
- [7] J. Gidley, G. Hampson, L. Wheeler, and E. Bereded-Samuel, "Social inclusion: Context, theory and practice," *The Australasian Journal of University-Community Engagement*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 6–36, 2010.
- [8] Anonymous, "DESA (2009). Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration. Copenhagen: Department of Economic and Social Affairs -
- [9] Anonymous, "Social Inclusion," *Collins English Dictionary*. [www.collinsdictionary.com](http://www.collinsdictionary.com).
- [10] Anonymous, "Data dan Informasi Kementerian Kesehatan RI (2013). Gambaran Kesehatan Lanjut Usia. Buletin Jendela Data dan Informasi Kementerian Kesehatan RI Data dan Informasi Kementerian Kesehatan RI
- [11] M. Kendall, "Public library services for older adults," *Library review*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 16–29, 1996.

- [12] S. Maryam, *Menengenal Usia Lanjut dan Perawatannya*. Penerbit Salemba, 2008.
- [13] Y. Turana, "Stimulasi otak pada kelompok lansia di komunitas," *PD RI, Buletin Lansia*, pp. 19–24, 2013.
- [14] A. Laugesen, "Australia and the globalisation of the public library," *The Australian Library Journal*, vol. 64, no. 4, pp. 301–307, 2015.
- [15] Anonymous, "Guidelines for Library and Information Services to Older Adults," *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 209–212, Aug. 2011.
- [16] S. Dury *et al.*, "Is volunteering in later life impeded or stimulated by other activities?," *Research on aging*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 51–75, 2016.
- [17] M. Lou Strong, L. Guillot, and J. Badeau, "Senior CHAT: A model for health literacy instruction," *New Library World*, vol. 113, no. 5/6, pp. 249–261, 2012.