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## Promoting Gender Equality through Citizenship Education in Elementary School

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**Abstract.** Indonesia is one of the countries that ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The consequence that must be considered is that Indonesia is obliged to solve all problems and resolve gender issues and guarantee gender and guarantee children's rights, one of which is getting the right to education. Gender equality is an agenda that cannot be ruled out in education. Both in the learning process and learning as well as being the purpose of learning. Gender based education, gender sensitive education, gender responsive education or gender mainstreaming in the field of education continues to be launched. Then, promoting gender equality to students is something that should be implemented since elementary school. Promoting gender equality not only through gender-based education by inserting values and characters in students, but also can integrate into material, models, and learning strategies. Citizenship Education is a subject that is sufficiently collected in the achievement of gender equality. This is so because in citizenship education is material that intersects with genders such as human rights, democratic education, and multicultural education. If gender perspective has been introduced early in the elementary school stage by adjusting cognitive and affective development, then it is not impossible that gender equality can be realized as one of the commitments from Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Keywords:** Promoting Gender, Gender Equality, Citizenship Education, Elementary School

**INTRODUCTION** ~ The 2013 curriculum has been implemented particularly at the Elementary School level. The learning process in the form of themes becomes a characteristic that is implemented at this level. Kadir and Asrohah (2015: 1) state that thematic learning is a learning program that departs from a particular theme/topic and then is elaborated from various aspects or viewed from various perspectives on subjects commonly taught in schools. There is a reason why at the elementary school level is implemented through an integrated learning process, no longer in the form of subjects that stand alone. In the cognitive development of students at the elementary school level, it will be easier to absorb lessons in the form of themes. According to Winataputra

(2014), the consideration is why students in elementary schools are applied in the form of thematic or integrated because students have a framework that is holistic and not yet fragmentary and detailed. The field of study in Citizenship Education has characteristics related to other fields of study because Citizenship Education is multifaceted. Wahab and Sapriya (2011: 96) states that Nationality Education is a multifaceted study field with a cross-cutting context of science. This shows that the Citizenship Education is so broad because it has characteristics that are also multidisciplinary because in essence the object of Citizenship Education studies is always focused on the behavior of citizens. The Citizenship Education Study that focuses on citizen behavior emphasizes



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the understanding of the rights and obligations as citizens. Therefore, democratic education and human rights studies are included in the domain of Citizenship Education. Therefore, Citizenship Education has a role as a democratic education and human rights education. In both studies, it is very possible to study gender studies and promote gender equality. The Dakar Framework for Action in Wilson (2003) emphasizes that there are two gender-based goals. In Article 7 (ii) participants commit to eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education in 2005. The second commitment is to achieve gender equality in education (Article 7 (v)). Based on this framework it became clear that gender equality should have started to be promoted since elementary school.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Gender Equality

Before understanding gender equality, we need to understand the concept of gender which is not only limited to the sex between men and women. Gender is the result of social construction to differentiate the roles of men and women in various aspects of life. The concept of gender according to Smith (1999) is associated with different roles for men and women which carry the connotation arising from history which is applied to only one sex. Resulting in problems that arise because some roles may not be performed or

possessed in one particular gender. These stereotypes and stigmas cause gender equality to be fought for.

Gender equality is a concept where there are no inequalities experienced by men and women in fulfilling their rights as human beings. Gender equality continues to be echoed to invite every citizen to be aware of their obligations and rights as citizens not to look at men or women. Access to education, health, politics and the economy is on the agenda in voicing the demands that the state must provide. One of the goals declared by PPB in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is gender equality which is at number five. Gender equality is a condition in which the opportunity and all individual access, rights and obligations are not determined by a particular gender. Furthermore, according to UNESCO what is meant by gender equality are:

"Women and men have equal conditions, treatment, and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and contributing to (and benefit from), economic, social, cultural, and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and differences of women and men, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in the home, community, and society."



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If we look at the definition proposed by UNESCO, we can see that the role of men and women in gender equality is not a problem, because in essence men and women should have the same opportunity to develop their potential. However, gender equality can still be found due to gender biases that often occur in several sectors such as education, politics, and the economy.

Gender inequality is still found in several sectors such as economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Based on the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report reported by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2018), Indonesia occupies 85th place of 149 countries. Acar-Erdol and Gözütok (2018) state that:

"Gender inequality is the situation in which certain individuals cannot benefit from the rights and opportunities - due to their gender - that the individuals from the opposite gender can, or the situation in which the opportunities fall short of meeting the individuals' needs. Gender inequality is based on the inequality between the roles of men and women. In other words, unfairly men and women access and use social opportunities and resources. "

Based on the above sentence, Acar-Erdol and Gözütok assert that gender inequality occurs because a person's rights and obligations are viewed in terms of their sex. In other words, there is injustice in gaining

access and opportunities that individuals get because they are determined by a certain gender. Some countries have different ways to promote gender equality. For example, in Finland, there is the concept of gender equality work, meaning that this concept involves all activities such as teaching, training, guidance, development, and research that cannot be separated to promote gender equality (Ylöstalo and Brunila: 2017).

Indonesia has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which is carried by the United Nations. In both conventions, Indonesia must be consistent in eliminating discrimination against women and protecting children's rights, in other words, gender equality must be one of the agendas in national development.

## Citizenship Education

Citizenship has the concept of how the relationship between the state and citizens, citizens and citizens, and institutions and institutions governed by the constitution of a country. So, every country must have a national curriculum that aims to shape students into citizens who know their country well. Knowing the country certainly can be taught through education, so students will grow in love for their country. The concept of citizenship education has many views from scholars. Citizenship education is an effort made by



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the state to provide education to citizens to understand their rights and obligations. Some countries have a concept of citizenship education that is in line with the country's ideology and identity.

Citizenship education also emphasizes democratic attitudes. One of the goals of citizenship education is to educate students to become citizens who understand democracy. So in the process of learning citizenship education, teachers not only teach content about democracy but also make the classroom a democratic laboratory. This is consistent with what was said by Hoge in Lin (2014) that citizenship education refers to instructional strategies that promote democratic ways of thinking that foster informed and active citizenship. Active citizens are citizens who can show an attitude of participation, respect for differences and be actively involved in society. As said by Banks (2014) related to citizenship education must be extended to include cultural rights for citizens of various races, cultures, ethnicities, and language groups. Therefore, citizenship education not only teaches about democracy but also multiculturalism.

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) in Oonk (2004) drafted citizenship education for the European Union. The ICCS states that there are three dimensions in teaching civic education: (1) dimensions of content that specifically teach about citizenship; (2) affective-behavioral dimensions that describe the types of students' perceptions

and activities that can be measured; (3) cognitive dimensions that describe thought processes that can also be measured. Furthermore, Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) in England in Geboers et al., (2014) describes the dimensions in citizenship education differentiated into knowledge, student understanding and conception; students' views, beliefs and experiences; student attitude; and student participation and involvement. From the dimensions described, this is in line with the concept of citizenship education proposed by Branson in CCE (1998) which emphasizes citizen competency, namely civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition.

Furthermore, citizenship education in addition to aiming at forming students into citizens who understand their rights and obligations is also obliged to direct students to become active citizens. In other words, citizenship education also includes service-learning. According to Brandell and Hinck in Lin (2014) that civic education should also be a program that teaches students to provide services to the community as a form of good citizens. Still according to Brandell and Hinck who emphasized service-learning as an academic program in the curriculum that assigns students to various service projects to meet the needs of the community.

### **Citizenship Education in Elementary School**

Citizenship education implemented in Indonesia is taught at every level of



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education. Citizenship education is a compulsory subject for all students to take. In citizenship education in higher education is also given to first-year students as compulsory general courses. This indicates that Indonesia commits to forming students into smart and good citizens. This commitment is implicit and explicit in the objectives of Indonesia's national education which can be seen from the mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in article 3 which confirms that:

"The goal of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who have faith and are devoted to God Almighty, have good character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens".

Based on the goals of national education above, we can note that the final emphasis on these objectives is to make students become democratic and responsible citizens. In this way, forming students into intelligent and good citizens is not only weighted on citizenship education subjects, but this is the responsibility of all subjects. Even though citizenship education is central because citizenship education is an education of values, morals, and character.

Elementary school becomes the initial level to prepare students to become young citizens and future citizens. With the 2013 curriculum in force in Indonesia,

citizenship education has become a subject that has been incorporated into other thematic subjects. Thematic learning applied in elementary schools is considered suitable for learning following students' cognitive development. Several theme titles applied to elementary schools strongly characterize citizenship education, for example, Living in Peace, My Rights and Obligations, The Beauty of Togetherness, My Heroes, The Beauty of My Country, Unity in Diversity, and Globalization.

In the Netherlands implementing citizenship education by giving freedom to schools to promote active citizenship and social integration. Moreover, the Dutch law made the promotion of "active citizenship and social integration" at primary schools' mandatory was introduced by the government in 2006 in order to address particular disquiets about changes in Dutch society relating to growing individualization and fears about the loss of national values due to increased diversity (Eijkemans et al., 2017). The Netherlands is committed that since elementary school students must be taught to be active citizens and promote social integration given that the Netherlands has a multicultural or multicultural diversity due to the migration of several other citizens there.

Australia through its government also provides support for citizenship education in a wide-ranging program called Discovering Democracy. Discovering



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Democracy resources, including primary and secondary school kits and the Discovering Democracy Australian Readers were sent to all schools and teacher professional development programs were conducted in all states and territories around these resources (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010). They believe that citizenship education can promote knowledge about the legacy of democracy that has been carried out in Australia. It also increases students' knowledge of political and legal institutions and makes students young citizens able to participate in society.

Based on the explanation related to citizenship education in elementary schools from several countries, we can see that citizenship education is mandatory for primary school students. This is done so that elementary school students already know and practice democracy early on. Besides, it also provides the provisions of elementary school students for the next level.

## METHOD

The method used in this article uses the method of study literature or theoretical study, which describes theories related to the title of the article made. Furthermore, the literature study conducted by the author is by searching various written sources, whether in the form of books, archives, magazines, articles, and journals, or documents that are relevant to the problem under study. So the information

obtained from the literature study is used as a reference to strengthen the existing arguments.

## DISCUSSION

### Promoting Gender Equality through Citizenship Education

One of the goals of citizenship education is to make students understand their rights and obligations as citizens. In citizenship education, students are invited to become citizens who actively participate in society, can make quick and right decisions, and have an attitude of tolerance that is reflected by accepting differences. Citizenship education has several missions according to Winataputra (2015), namely socio-pedagogical mission, socio-cultural mission, and substantive-academic. In the socio-pedagogical mission, students are emphasized by developing themselves as individuals who understand their rights and obligations as citizens. The socio-cultural mission is a mission that facilitates students to practice democracy in terms of diversity, in other words being able to coexist with those who are different. The last mission is the substantive-academic mission were experts who study related citizenship education continue to develop the concept of citizenship education by conducting research and development on the discipline of civic education. Considering that citizenship education is multidisciplinary so the need for renewal is in line with the changing times.



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Several studies in citizenship education can promote gender equality. Like democracy education, human rights, and multicultural education. The three studies can integrate the concept of gender into gender studies into it. Integrating the concept of gender or gender studies required the foresight of teachers to use appropriate methods, models and learning strategies. According to Gaylard (2015), gender equality and awareness of gender rights must be promoted. This is important because teaching about gender issues can open the eyes of female students and educate male students on gender equality. One of the subjects of citizenship education is human rights. In studying human rights, of course, it cannot be separated from gender studies. Discussing discrimination against women in a human rights study opens students' views on gender equality and justice.

Studying gender through citizenship education is a form of effort made in the learning process in class. Arnot (2006) initiated the learner-citizen concept, he argues that this concept is useful for assigning tasks and signifying the important role that the education system plays in educating young people for citizenship and educating them about citizenship. However, the concept of gender is sometimes still absent in the learning process of citizenship education. Still, in Arnot (2016), he believes that:

"The absence of marginalization of the private sphere from the definition

of citizenship is a particularly important aspect of this marginalization of gender concerns. The failure of citizenship education to engage with the private sphere - "the affective domain" (Nussbaum 1995) - is linked to deeper notions about the rationality of citizenship and the irrelevance of personal/emotional relationships from civic discourse".

To foster gender equality in students, teachers must bring gender studies or gender concepts into the classroom. Through citizenship education as a vehicle for promoting gender equality, it can be integrated into study materials such as human rights, democracy, and multicultural education.

Furthermore, the study of democracy in citizenship education can also help promote gender equality. Studying democracy means learning how to be fair in thinking and not discriminating against those who are different. Gender studies talk about relations between men and women, in the study of democracy this relation always appears in the practice of democracy. In the process of learning gender inequality in democracy (politics for example) that occurs in Indonesia, it still appears, this can be discussed in the learning process that gender equality has not occurred at the state level. It has been proven that in parliament in Indonesia there has never been a 30% representation of women in parliament.



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Multicultural education which is also part of citizenship education can also take a role in promoting gender equality. Multicultural speaking is not only about culture, but gender studies can also be found there. In the multicultural concept a lot of talking about differences that make students know the knowledge repertoire grows. When students know these differences, then they will realize the need for tolerance in the face of a difference. Banks (2014) states that citizenship education should help students develop an identity for the global community and connect with people in different parts of the world. Maybe the ideas expressed by Banks are not entirely wrong, but their relationship with Indonesia, even before adding insight into the global community, students must understand that the patterns in Indonesia are very diverse. So, the provisions of Indonesian students who have an attitude of tolerance towards diversity or a pluralistic society should be high.

I try to emphasize the three studies (human rights, democracy, and multicultural education) which are part of citizenship education. That way, if the three studies each integrate the concept of gender or gender studies in the learning process, it is not impossible that gender equality can be promoted. Not only in the form of content in learning, but the process of learning must also be oriented towards gender equality.

So, of course, this is a challenge for teachers to create innovation in teaching practice in the classroom which must avoid gender bias and or unconsciously discriminate against a particular gender. Teaching material that is often found sometimes there is still discrimination against women or gender bias, here is the role of the teacher in rectifying things that are not gender-sensitive.

### **Promoting Gender Equality through Thematic Approach in Elementary School**

Elementary schools in Indonesia in the 2013 curriculum implemented a thematic learning system. Learning in the form of this theme is considered to help students more easily in the learning process and more interesting because it is following the contextual life of elementary school students. By using a theme-based approach, the teacher has the power to elaborate on learning models that are in line with the theme being taught.

In promoting gender equality in elementary schools through learning themes, teachers can choose themes that can be integrated into gender equality values. Based on the 2013 curriculum that has been determined by the government, several themes are suitable for inserting gender equality values in the learning process. 'Hidup Rukun' Theme taught in grade 2 in theme 1 contains how students are taught to get to know the school, home, and surrounding environment by having mutual respect, mutual respect, and tolerance.





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Furthermore, on this theme, students learn about the ideology of Pancasila, the emphasis on harmonious life can be illustrated in the 3rd precepts namely the Indonesian Unity. The 2nd Precept which reads Fair and Civilized Humanity can also integrate the values of gender equality in it. The second precept of Pancasila talks about equality between human beings in Indonesia so that students will understand that in the nation and state men and women have the same rights and obligations as citizens. Themes that discuss rights and obligations are in grade 3 theme 4.

The rights and obligations of students at home, school and the surrounding environment are important attitudes that students must understand and do. In rights and obligations, we talk about roles, so that through this theme in promoting gender equality it can be emphasized that to carry out rights and obligations can be done by men and women. The teacher should no longer give an example of who only goes to the market is Mother, while the one who goes to the office is Father. Teachers can promote gender equality, for example: "father and mother go to the market together on Sundays". Students will understand that going to the market is not only done by mothers but can also be done by fathers.

The Theme of Beautiful Togetherness in grade 4 theme 1 can also integrate the values of gender equality. That men and women in society can work together and

compete healthily, not looking at based on gender but their abilities. As stated by Zhukovsky and Kostiuk, they stated that:

"The content of gender education at the stage" antisexist and inclusive education "considerably expanded and included the issues of sexism as a problem of a system, not of an individual, sexuality, self-image, violence, relations, masculinity, discrimination, rights, career choice etc. in the context of various aspects of identity; teaching students the skills of cooperation, teamwork, peaceful and effective conflict management, problem solving and decision making."

Seeing the above explanation from Zhukovsky and Kostiuk that teachers should teach about gender (promoting gender equality) more emphasis on the abilities of students to cooperate, cooperatively and other abilities that involve each other between men and women.

The next theme is my hero. In theme 1, taught in grade 5, it can display female national heroes who also have a role in the struggle of the Indonesian nation. Grade 6 theme 2 with the theme Unity in Difference implies that it is not only a question of ethnic, cultural, religious diversity but also about gender. Almost the same in the theme Beautifulness of togetherness, the values of gender equality can be integrated into this theme by highlighting that men and women can work together



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as a group or be able to compete in sportsmanship.

The above themes are only a few small examples all the themes taught certainly can integrate gender equality. This can be done if the teacher can provide innovation in the learning process and promote gender-sensitive and eliminate all gender discrimination in the classroom. So, education for all and inclusive education can be realized when all aspects of education synergize together for the benefit of students and the quality of education.

### **Gender Equality in Elementary School**

Giving an understanding of gender equality to students must start from elementary school. At this level, students have begun to be introduced to gender concepts. By recognizing gender differences from an early age, opening an initial view for students about the similarities between men and women. Ylöstalo and Brunila (2017) have an idea about the concept of gender equality pedagogy, they argue that:

"With the idea of gender equality pedagogy, we seek to conceptualize the way gender equality work might be facilitated to increase the participants' knowledge and understanding of gender inequality as well as to give participants the tools to promote gender equality".

Seeing the ideas of Ylöstalo and Brunila, basically learning about gender does aim to create gender equality. The process experienced by students by learning about gender in terms of knowledge and participation will make students consciously have an understanding of gender equality.

Gender equality is also often associated with gender parity. Gender equality and gender parity are made a goal in education because they reflect one of the goals of the Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO in Subrahmanian, 2005) which states that:

"Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievements in basic education of good quality".

The gap between men and women in achieving education at elementary school level in Indonesia is still large when looking at the report from the Global Gender Gap Report 2018 reported by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2018). Gender parity is the amount seen with quantitative or numerical concepts. According to Subrahmanian (2005) in looking at gender parity in education, it can be seen whether or not participation is equal between male and female students in different aspects of the domain of education.



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Promoting gender equality has been important since elementary school because development in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor originated from elementary school. Students are given knowledge about the difference between sex and gender, so they will easily understand that the role of men and women in the concept of gender is exchangeable. In contrast to the concept of sex which is naturally created differently seen from biologically. In the Teacher Training Modules reported by the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam (2011: 7) in collaboration with UNESCO stated that gender equality is supported by several principles as below:

- Gender roles are socially constructed and interchangeable
- Men and women are equal in front of the law (i.e. they have equal rights and responsibilities)
- Men and women are given equal opportunities to fulfill their potential
- Men and women share the equal potential to learn and develop as persons and members of a community
- Men and women support one another and cooperate in the view of reaching individual and community progress and well-being.

The principles above become a guideline in promoting gender equality in the learning process that occurs in the classroom. That male and female students have equal opportunities to access and get the same treatment from schools and teachers.

The Inter-Agency Network for Education (INEE) issued a pocket guide to gender titled Gender Equality in and through

Education. In the pocket guide, INEE emphasized 4 foundational standards in promoting gender equality in schools. Some things to consider are (1) access and learning environment; (2) teaching and learning; (3) teachers and other education personnel; (4) education policy (INNE, 2010).

## CONCLUSION

Education is an important element of human life. Through education can change civilization even better than before. One of them is gender equality. Gender equality is an agenda that focuses on getting opportunities not to look at the sexes of men or women. It should promote gender equality early on, in this case, elementary school. In the learning process at the elementary school level in the form of themes, through citizenship education can promote gender equality. This is because in citizenship education there are discussions about democracy, human rights, and multicultural education. Teachers should emphasize attitudes and skills that between men and women cannot be different, such as cooperative skills, teamwork, peaceful and effective conflict management, problem-solving and decision making. These skills can unconsciously promote gender equality in the learning process in the classroom.

The agenda of promoting gender equality is not just a school assignment, it needs support from family and the society to do this together. The concept of gender equality requires that male and female



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students must get the same access and the same treatment. Gender biases and gender inequalities that still occur in education must continue to be made learning for all so that both of these things disappear from education.

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