

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS IN EMPOWERING MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

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### Abstract

Social organisations play an important role in helping disadvantaged communities. They work to improve the lives of people who are often overlooked or have difficulty getting help. The activities of social organisations include providing direct assistance, skills training, and trying to make changes in government policies. Despite facing many challenges, social organisations continue to strive to make a difference. They often work with governments and other groups to achieve their goals. The success of social organisations not only helps individuals, but can also improve society as a whole. The role of social organisations is invaluable in building a more just and prosperous society. They provide hope and support to those most in need, helping to create opportunities for people to better their own lives.

Keywords: Social Organisation, Empowerment, Marginalised Community.

### Introduction

The phenomenon of community marginalisation is one of the social challenges still faced by many countries in the world, including Indonesia. Marginalised communities are groups of individuals or communities that are marginalised from the mainstream of society, socially, economically, politically and culturally. They often face various forms of discrimination, limited access to basic resources and services, and lack of participation in decision-making that affects their lives. (Vizcaíno-Verdú & Aguaded, 2022).. These groups may include the urban and rural poor, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, refugees, migrant workers, or other groups experiencing social exclusion. These conditions of marginalisation are generally multidimensional and can be passed on between generations, creating cycles of poverty and underdevelopment that are difficult to break without appropriate interventions and support (Larson et al., 2022). (Larson et al., 2022)..

Marginalised communities often experience limited access to economic resources, education, health, and socio-political participation. This condition causes them to be trapped in a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment that is difficult to break without external intervention.

In this context, social organisations have a very important role as agents of change in empowering marginalised communities. Social organisations, whether in the form of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), foundations, or other civil society groups, have long been recognised as partners with the government in addressing various social problems. (Logie et al., 2022)..

Social organisations play a very important role for marginalised communities in improving their quality of life and empowering them. First, social organisations can serve as a platform to voice the aspirations and needs of marginalised communities that are often overlooked in public policies. (Einwohner et al., 2021).. Through these organisations, they can advocate for their rights, fight for equality, and push for more inclusive social change. In addition, social organisations can also facilitate access to previously hard-to-reach resources and services, such as education, health, and economic opportunities (Sievwright et al., 2021). (Sievwright et al., 2022)..

Second, social organisations play a role in building the capacity and empowerment of marginalised communities. Through various programmes and activities, these organisations can provide skills training, mentoring, and support needed to improve the capabilities and confidence of their members. (Bromfield et al., 2021). This can help marginalised communities become more economically independent, increase their participation in social and political life, and build strong solidarity networks among community members. Thus, social organisations not only serve as a bridge between marginalised communities and other parties, but also as a catalyst for change that enables them to move out of marginalisation and achieve a better life (MacEwen & Evensen, 2021). (MacEwen & Evensen, 2021)..

However, while many social organisations have made efforts to empower marginalised communities, the effectiveness and sustainability of these programmes are still in question. Some studies show that not all empowerment efforts succeed in achieving their goals or have significant long-term impacts. This is due to various factors, such as limited resources, inappropriate approaches, or lack of participation from the target community (Staines, 2021). (Staines, 2021).

On the other hand, there are also examples of successful social organisations in empowering marginalised communities. Some organisations have developed innovative and effective empowerment models, which can serve as lessons for other organisations and the government. (İşleyen & Kreitmeyr, 2021)..

Given the important role of social organisations in empowering marginalised communities, as well as the variation in the success rate of these efforts, a comprehensive study is needed to understand more about the role of social organisations in this context. This literature review will explore various aspects related to the role of social organisations in empowering marginalised communities, including forms of empowerment, challenges faced, and effective strategies. (Pei & Chib, 2021).

Against this background, this research aims to examine in depth the role of social organisations in empowering marginalised communities through a comprehensive literature review.

## **Research Methods**

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method, also known as a literature study or literature review, is a research approach that involves collecting, analysing, and synthesising information from various written sources relevant to the research topic. (Raco, 2018); (Sugiyono, 2010). This method involves a systematic search of books, journal articles, research reports, theses, dissertations, and other credible sources, both in print and digital form. The researcher then reviews, evaluates, and integrates the information obtained to identify patterns, trends, gaps in knowledge, and develop a comprehensive understanding of a topic. The literature research method not only serves as a theoretical foundation for further research, but can also be a standalone study that generates new insights or different perspectives on a particular phenomenon or problem. (Nasution, 1996).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The role of social organisations in empowering marginalised communities**

Social organisation is a structured and organised system formed from interactions between individuals or groups in society to achieve common goals. These organisations take many forms, from formal institutions such as governments, schools and companies, to informal groups such as communities, families and peer groups. (Hampton, 2021). Social organisations serve to regulate behaviour, distribute roles and responsibilities, and facilitate cooperation and coordination among its members. Through mutually agreed norms, values and rules, social organisations help create order in society, meet collective needs and promote the achievement of social goals. The existence of social organisations is crucial in shaping the structure of society, influencing social interactions, and determining how resources are distributed and utilised in the context of living together. (Collins, 2022).

Social organisations come in many different types that can be classified based on their purpose, structure and function in society. Some of the main types of social organisations include: (1) Formal organisations, such as governments, companies, and educational institutions, which have a hierarchical structure and clear written rules; (2) Informal organisations, such as friendship groups or hobby communities, which form spontaneously and have unwritten rules; (3) Voluntary organisations, such as NGOs or social clubs, whose members join on their own accord for a specific purpose; (4) Profit and non-profit organisations, which are distinguished by their financial goals; (5) Primary organisations, such as families, which form the basis of early socialisation; and (6) Secondary organisations, such as professional associations, which form based on

specific interests or goals. (Savelyeva & Park, 2022).. In addition, there are also religious organisations, political organisations, and community-based organisations, each of which has a unique role in shaping and influencing the social dynamics of society.

Social organisations have several crucial functions in society that play an important role in maintaining social order and development. First, social organisations serve as a platform for socialisation, where individuals learn about the prevailing social norms, values and roles in society. Second, social organisation plays a role in regulating and coordinating the behaviour of community members, helping to create order and predictability in social interactions. Third, social organisation facilitates the distribution of resources and division of labour, increasing efficiency in meeting collective needs. (Ravazzoli et al., 2021).. Fourth, social organisations function as agents of social change, encouraging innovation and adaptation to new challenges in society. Fifth, social organisations provide structures for conflict resolution and collective decision-making. Sixth, social organisations play a role in strengthening social identity and cohesion, building a sense of community and solidarity among community members. Finally, social organisations serve as channels for political and social participation, allowing individuals to contribute to policy formation and social change. (Atallah et al., 2021).. With these functions, social organisations become a fundamental element in maintaining stability, promoting development, and improving the quality of life in society.

Social organisations play a vital role in the empowerment of marginalised communities, acting as catalysts for change and bridges between marginalised groups and wider resources and opportunities. Through various programmes and initiatives, social organisations work to improve quality of life, open up access to basic services, and promote equality for those who are often overlooked in mainstream development. (James & Buffel, 2023).

One of the key roles of social organisations is in education and skills enhancement. They often organise vocational training programmes, literacy courses and other non-formal education tailored to the specific needs of marginalised communities. These efforts not only improve individuals' knowledge and skills, but also open up new economic opportunities, enabling community members to increase their income and break out of the cycle of poverty (Jørgensen et al., 2021).

Social organisations also play an important role in legal advocacy and empowerment. They are often the voice for communities that do not have access to decision-making processes, fighting for their rights, and pushing for more inclusive policy changes. Through legal assistance, public awareness campaigns, and lobbying policymakers, social organisations help marginalised communities to better understand and claim their rights, and actively participate in democratic processes. (Roels et al., 2022)..

Furthermore, social organisations play a role in building social capital and strengthening community cohesion. They facilitate the formation of self-help groups,

cooperatives and other support networks that enable marginalised communities to help each other and organise themselves. Initiatives such as community savings programmes, food banks, or community-based development projects not only improve economic well-being, but also build a sense of collective ownership and empowerment. Through this participatory approach, social organisations help marginalised communities to identify their own needs, plan solutions, and implement sustainable change, thus creating a solid foundation for long-term development and community self-reliance.

### **Forms of Empowerment of Marginalised Communities by Social Organisations**

Community empowerment is a process that aims to increase the capacity and independence of individuals and groups in a community, so that they are able to recognise their potential, identify problems faced, and make decisions independently to improve their quality of life. (Benoit & Unsworth, 2022).. The concept involves the transfer of knowledge, skills, and resources to communities, while encouraging their active participation in the development process. Community empowerment not only focuses on economic aspects, but also includes social, cultural, and political dimensions, with the ultimate goal of creating sustainable and equitable positive change. Through empowerment, people are expected to have more control over their lives, participate in decision-making that affects them, and ultimately achieve self-reliance in fulfilling their needs and aspirations. (Shim & Starks, 2021).

The ultimate goal of community empowerment is to create conditions where individuals and communities have the ability to control their own destiny and improve the quality of life in a sustainable manner. This is achieved through increased awareness, knowledge, and skills that enable communities to identify problems, formulate solutions, and take collective action. Empowerment aims to reduce dependence on outsiders, increase participation in decision-making, and strengthen the community's capacity to access resources and opportunities (de-Lima-Santos & de-Lima-Santos, 2014). (de-Lima-Santos & Mesquita, 2023).. In addition, empowerment also aims to promote social justice, reduce economic disparities, and foster inclusive and equitable development. Ultimately, the goal of community empowerment is to create communities that are self-reliant, resilient, and able to adapt to change, and have the ability to continue to develop and improve their living conditions in a sustainable manner. (Atisa et al., 2021).

Social organisations have an important role in empowering marginalised communities through various forms of programmes and initiatives. One form of empowerment that is often carried out is skills development and education. Social organisations can provide vocational training, life skills courses, and non-formal education programmes to improve the capacity and competitiveness of marginalised communities in the labour market. In addition, financial literacy and entrepreneurship

programmes are also often provided to help them manage their personal finances and start small businesses, thus increasing their economic independence. (Smith, 2021).

Another form of empowerment is through advocacy and legal assistance. Social organisations can help marginalised communities understand their rights, access public services, and fight for social justice. This can include assistance in obtaining identity documents, representation in cases of discrimination or rights violations, and efforts to influence public policies that are more inclusive and favourable to marginalised groups. (Battilana et al., 2022)..

Empowerment in the form of community development is also a key focus for many social organisations. This can include the formation of self-help groups, co-operatives, or community associations that enable members to support each other, share resources, and collaborate in addressing common challenges. Community development programmes also often involve efforts to strengthen social capital, build trust among community members, and encourage active participation in decision-making at the local level. (Sharma et al., 2022)..

Finally, many social organisations also focus on empowerment through access to health and social welfare services. This can include organising mobile health clinics, health education programmes, or facilitating access to government health services. In terms of social welfare, organisations may assist in the provision of food aid, temporary shelter, or psychosocial support for vulnerable groups. Through this holistic approach, social organisations seek to address the multiple dimensions of poverty and marginalisation, and build a strong foundation for the long-term empowerment of marginalised communities.

### **Challenges and Obstacles in Empowering Marginalised Communities**

Empowering marginalised communities faces complex challenges and obstacles. One of the main challenges is limited resources, both financial and human. Social organisations and empowerment agencies often face difficulties in obtaining sustainable funding to run long-term programmes. (Ravazzoli et al., 2021).. This lack of funding can hinder the scale and effectiveness of empowerment programmes. In addition, the shortage of trained and dedicated professionals to work in remote areas or challenging environments is also a serious obstacle to empowerment efforts. (Fish & Syed, 2021).

Another significant challenge is cultural and social resistance. Marginalised communities often have deeply rooted traditional values or customs, which may conflict with modern concepts of empowerment. For example, rigid views on gender roles may hinder women's participation in economic empowerment programmes. In addition, social stigma and discrimination against marginalised groups may hinder their access to opportunities and services. Overcoming these cultural and social barriers requires a sensitive approach and time. (Lau, 2021).

Structural and policy barriers are also a major challenge in empowering marginalised communities. Government policies that do not favour marginalised groups, cumbersome bureaucracy, and lack of basic infrastructure in remote areas can hinder the effectiveness of empowerment programmes. For example, the absence of road access or electricity can limit local economic development opportunities. In addition, inequities in the distribution of resources and opportunities at the macro level can complicate empowerment efforts at the micro level. (Su et al., 2023).

Internal challenges within the marginalised groups themselves cannot be ignored. Low levels of education and skills can complicate the process of knowledge transfer and capacity building. Mistrust of outsiders, which may be due to negative past experiences, can inhibit active participation in empowerment programmes. (Lam et al., 2022). In addition, internal conflict or fragmentation within the community may hinder collective efforts for empowerment. Overcoming these challenges requires a holistic approach, patience, and long-term commitment from all parties involved in the process of empowering marginalised communities.

### **Effective Strategies for Empowering Marginalised Communities**

Empowering marginalised communities requires a comprehensive and sustainable strategy. One effective strategy is a participatory approach, where marginalised communities are actively involved in every stage of the empowerment programme, from planning to evaluation. This approach ensures that the programme is truly in line with the needs and aspirations of the community, and increases their sense of ownership of the programme. (Wallerstein, 2021). For example, through community discussion forums or the formation of local committees, communities can identify their own priorities and co-design solutions that fit the local context (Andriani et al., 2021). (Andriani et al., 2022)..

Capacity building is another key strategy in empowering marginalised communities. It involves improving people's knowledge, skills, and abilities through various forms of training and education. (Hanuun et al., 2023). Programmes such as entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, or technical skills development can open up new economic opportunities for marginalised communities. In addition, strengthening local leadership through management and advocacy training can help communities to be more effective in fighting for their rights and interests (Odeyemi et al., 2023). (Odeyemi et al., 2024)..

Building strategic partnerships is another important strategy. Collaboration between the government, private sector, non-governmental organisations and local communities can create powerful synergies in empowerment efforts. For example, companies can provide employment or training opportunities, while the government can facilitate access to basic services and infrastructure. Non-governmental organisations can play a role in capacity building and advocacy, while universities can

contribute through research and innovation. These multi-stakeholder partnerships can increase the effectiveness and sustainability of empowerment programmes. (Bondi et al., 2021).

Finally, an effective empowerment strategy should emphasise sustainability and self-reliance. This involves developing social or co-operative business models that can generate income for communities, thereby reducing dependence on external assistance. The establishment of community savings and loan groups, for example, can increase access to capital and promote financial independence. In addition, strengthening local institutions and social networks can help marginalised communities to be more resilient in the face of challenges. With a focus on sustainability, empowerment strategies can create significant long-term impact, enabling marginalised communities to gradually break out of the cycle of poverty and marginalisation.

## **Conclusion**

Social organisations play a very important and vital role in the empowerment of marginalised communities. Through various programmes and initiatives, these organisations successfully bridge the gap between marginalised groups and the resources and opportunities they need to improve their quality of life. The role of social organisations is not only limited to providing direct assistance, but also includes policy advocacy, capacity building, and facilitating community participation in the development process. With a holistic and empowerment-oriented approach, social organisations have proven to be able to create significant and sustainable changes in the lives of marginalised communities.

However, the effectiveness of the role of social organisations in empowering marginalised communities depends on several key factors. First, the organisation's ability to understand and respond to the specific needs of the target community. Second, the capacity to build strong partnerships with various stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and the community itself. Third, long-term commitment and a sustainable approach to running empowerment programmes. By taking these factors into account, social organisations can maximise their positive impact and contribute significantly to uplifting the lives of marginalised communities, as well as promoting a more inclusive and equitable society.

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