

THE ROLE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN POLITICAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out The Role of Persons with Disabilities in Political Education and Awareness of Political Participation. The method of this research is descriptive, analytical, and critical. Therefore, the author can provide a comprehensive description of the Role of Persons with Disabilities in Political Education and Awareness of Political Participation. In this study, the author optimally uses two data sources related to this research, namely. Primary data sources and secondary data sources. The results of this study indicate that political awareness among people with disabilities is on the rise. However, challenges in terms of accessibility and support still significantly hinder their participation. Sustained efforts from governments, election organizers, and the public are needed to create an inclusive political environment and support the active involvement of people with disabilities.

Keywords: *Disabilities, Political Education, Awareness, Political Participation*

Introduction

Individuals with disabilities play a strategic role in political education, both as active participants and as agents of change within an inclusive political system. Political education for them not only guarantees constitutional rights but also strengthens democracy by ensuring that their voices are heard and valued.(DELTA, 2024). Political Rights Guaranteed by Law, According to Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, persons with disabilities have the right to receive political education. Article 13, letter f, explicitly states that individuals have the right to political education, which is part

of a broader political right, including the right to vote and be elected, to channel their political aspirations, and to participate actively in the electoral system at all stages.(Yasin, 2022)

Inclusive Political Education in Various Regions. Several regions in Indonesia have implemented political education programs for people with disabilities. For example, the National and Political Unity Agency (Kesbangpol) of South Kalimantan Province conducted a socialization session on political education at the Fajar Harapan Social Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Visual and Physical Disabilities, involving participants from various disability backgrounds. Similarly, in Yogyakarta, the Yogyakarta City Government, through the Yogyakarta City Kesbangpol, conducted election socialization activities for students with disabilities at the Extraordinary School (SLB) of the Yogyakarta Pembina State, as an effort to ensure that they do not lose their political rights in the 2024 elections.(Rahim & others, 2016)

The ENGAGE Training Program, organized by the University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta (UMJ) in collaboration with the Indonesian Association of Persons with Disabilities (PPDI) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), aims to provide political education for young leaders with disabilities. This program includes leadership training, advocacy, public speaking, and internships at the DKI Jakarta KPU and Bawaslu RI. The primary objective is to equip young individuals with disabilities to play an active role in politics and government.(Osborne et al., 2018)

Challenges and Barriers, Despite efforts for inclusivity, people with disabilities still face various challenges in political education. Lack of information accessibility, limited physical facilities at polling stations, and lack of understanding of the public and election organizers about the special needs of persons with disabilities are the main obstacles. Therefore, a joint commitment is needed to create a disability-friendly political environment—the Role of Persons with Disabilities in Education Policy. The involvement of persons with disabilities in politics can also encourage positive changes in education policy. By being involved in the decision-making process, they can help influence more inclusive and equitable policies, such as the development of educational programs tailored to their needs and increased accessibility in schools.(Fariji et al., 2024)

Awareness of political participation among people with disabilities in Indonesia shows positive developments, although they are still faced with various challenges. They are increasingly aware of their political rights, but structural and social barriers still limit their involvement to a maximum. Political Awareness of Persons with Disabilities, Research in Payakumbuh City shows that although people with disabilities have a good awareness of their voting rights, their participation in the 2017 Regional Elections is low. This is due to the lack of proper socialization from election organizers and the lack of attention to the specific needs of people with disabilities. In Yogyakarta, political education for students with disabilities at SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta has been carried out to increase their awareness ahead of the 2024 elections. The city government is committed to continuing

to provide assistance and election simulations to help people with disabilities exercise their voting rights effectively.(Febriantanto, 2019)

Barriers to Political Participation. Some of the factors that hinder the political participation of persons with disabilities include a Lack of inclusive socialization. Election information is often not delivered in a way that is accessible to persons with disabilities, such as the absence of materials in Braille or sign language. Undisability-friendly election facilities: Polling locations often don't provide adequate accessibility, such as ramps for wheelchairs or clear directions. Lack of support: People with disabilities usually do not get the help they need when exercising their right to vote, either from their families or election officials.(Oktapiani et al., 2022)

Several steps have been taken to increase the political participation of persons with disabilities. Political education: Political education programs in SLB and disability communities help improve their understanding of the political process and the importance of their participation. Assistance during elections: Providing companions for people with disabilities when exercising their voting rights can help overcome the practical obstacles they face. Advocacy for inclusive policies: Organizations of persons with disabilities encourage governments and political parties to implement policies that support their participation, such as providing disability-friendly facilities and ensuring accessibility of information. (Oktapiani et al., 2022)

The following is a summary of several previous studies that discuss the role of persons with disabilities in political education and awareness of political participation in Indonesia: Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Payakumbuh City Regional Elections (2017) This study identifies the low political participation of persons with disabilities in the Payakumbuh City Regional Elections. The main factors that affect are the lack of targeted socialization from the KPU and the lack of attention to the needs of people with disabilities. Despite this, people with disabilities have a good awareness of their voting rights. Analysis of Determinants of Increasing Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Yogyakarta City Regional Election (2017) This study found that the increase in political participation of persons with disabilities was influenced by factors of political education, involvement in political discussions, the influence of figures with disabilities, and personal willingness to be involved. Social characteristics such as economic status, race, ethnicity, and religion have no significant effect.

Political Participation of Novice Voters with Deaf Disabilities in the Jakarta Governor Election (2017), This study reveals that the political participation of South Jakarta Gerkatin members is limited to campaigns, political discussions, political communication, and voting. Key barriers include a lack of socialization, inadequate mentoring, and limited disability-friendly facilities. Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Gunungkidul Regency Regional Elections (2020). This study demonstrates that educational and geographical factors influence the low political participation of individuals with disabilities. Their form of participation includes being a member of KPPS and Panwaslu. Organizations such as PPD Prosperous Partners serve as a forum for political participation

for people with disabilities. Political Education and Political Participation of People with Disabilities in the South Tangerang Regional Election (2020), This study assesses the role of the South Tangerang City KPU in providing political education to people with disabilities. Despite the enthusiasm of people with disabilities, obstacles such as limited numbers of officers and differences in educational methods reduce the effectiveness of their political participation.

Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Influence of the Conditions of Public Facilities for Persons with Disabilities in Banyumas Regency. This study examines the impact of the availability of disability-friendly public facilities on the political participation of individuals with disabilities. The results showed that despite the significant influence, their contribution was low (1.7%), indicating that other factors also influenced their political participation. Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Two Cities (Malang and Mojokerto), This study maps the political involvement of groups with disabilities in five forms: elections, organizations, contacts, lobbying, and violence. It was found that there is a difference between awareness and action in the political participation of groups with disabilities, as their involvement is still limited and they are unable to influence public policy. From the above studies, it can be concluded that although political awareness among people with disabilities is increasing, various obstacles such as a lack of proper socialization, disability-friendly facilities, and limited organizational support are still significant challenges in improving their political participation.

Metodologi penelitian

This research is a type of literature research; This means that the information materials used come from library sources in the form of books, encyclopedias, magazines, journals, newspapers, and others (Sutrisno Hadi, 1987) The form of this research is descriptive, analytical, and critical. Therefore, the author can provide a comprehensive description of the Role of Persons with Disabilities in Political Education and Awareness of Political Participation. In this study, the author optimally uses two data sources related to this research, namely. Primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary sources for this research are books and scientific journals on The Role of Persons with Disabilities. At the same time, this research is supported (secondary) by other works of thought related to the research results related to the role of in Political Education and Awareness of Political Participation. Such research has not existed, so the author must convey this through this article.

Results and discussion

Political education for people with disabilities in Indonesia has become a key focus in efforts to achieve an inclusive democracy. While there have been positive steps, challenges in accessibility and political awareness still need to be addressed.

Legal Obligations and Political Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities affirms the political rights of persons with disabilities, including the right to vote and be elected, to channel their political aspirations, and to obtain political education. However, the implementation of these rights is often constrained by a lack of adequate accessibility and socialization. (Dibley & Tsaputra, 2019)

Political Education Initiatives in Various Regions

Several regions have implemented political education programs for persons with disabilities:

1. **South Kalimantan:** The National and Political Unity Agency (Kesbangpol) of South Kalimantan Province conducted a socialization session on political education for people with disabilities at the Fajar Harapan Social Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Visual and Physical Disabilities. This activity aims to increase their understanding of political rights and the electoral process.
2. **Yogyakarta:** The Yogyakarta City Government, through the Yogyakarta City Kesbangpol, conducted election socialization to students with disabilities at the Yogyakarta State Coach Special School (SLB). This activity aims to ensure that they do not lose their political rights in the 2024 election.
3. **Malang:** The Malang City Bakesbangpol held a political socialization event for people with disabilities in collaboration with various communities. This activity aims to foster an independent and critical society in voting and participating in the electoral process. (Bray, 2003)

Leadership and Advocacy Training Program

Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta (UMJ) held ENGAGE Training for young people with disabilities ahead of the 2024 Regional Elections. This training encompasses material on leadership, elections, advocacy, and public speaking, to enhance the skills and leadership capabilities of individuals with disabilities, enabling them to play an active role in the implementation of elections and regional elections. (Long et al., 2011)

Obstacles in Political Education for Persons with Disabilities

Some of the obstacles faced in political education for people with disabilities include:

1. **Lack of accessibility of information:** Political education materials are often not available in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities, such as Braille or sign language.
2. **Disability-friendly election facilities:** Polling locations often don't provide adequate accessibility, such as ramps for wheelchairs or clear directions.
3. **Lack of inclusive socialization:** The socialization of political education often fails to reach people with disabilities effectively, both in schools and in the community. (Opoku et al., 2016)

Recommendations to Improve Political Education for Persons with Disabilities

To improve political education for people with disabilities, some of the steps that can be taken include:

1. **Provision of political education materials in an accessible format:** Provision of materials in Braille, audio, or sign language formats to ensure accessibility of information.
2. **Improved disability-friendly election facilities:** Provide adequate facilities at polling places to ensure people with disabilities can easily exercise their voting rights.
3. **Inclusive socialization:** Conducting political education socialization that reaches people with disabilities through various channels, including inclusive schools and disability communities.
4. **Leadership and advocacy training:** Organizing training that can improve the skills and leadership of people with disabilities to be able to play an active role in politics.(Waltz & Schippers, 2021)

With these measures, it is hoped that people with disabilities can have equal access to political education and can actively participate in the democratic process in Indonesia. Awareness of political participation among people with disabilities in Indonesia shows significant development, although it is still faced with various challenges. Various studies show that although people with disabilities have a good awareness of their political rights, their participation in the political process is often limited by internal and external factors.

Political Awareness of Persons with Disabilities

Research in Payakumbuh City indicates that individuals with disabilities possess a high level of awareness of democracy and their voting rights. However, their low participation in the 2017 Regional Elections is due to the lack of targeted socialization from election organizers and the lack of attention to the specific needs of people with disabilities.

In Yogyakarta City, the increase in political participation by persons with disabilities in the 2017 Regional Elections was influenced by factors such as political education, involvement in political discussions, the influence of figures with disabilities, and personal willingness to be involved. Social characteristics such as economic status, race, ethnicity, and religion have no significant effect.(Bah, 2022)

Barriers to Political Participation

Some of the factors that hinder the political participation of people with disabilities include:

1. **Lack of inclusive socialization:** Election information is often not delivered in a manner accessible to people with disabilities, such as the absence of materials in Braille or sign language.
2. **Disability-friendly election facilities:** Polling locations often don't provide adequate accessibility, such as ramps for wheelchairs or clear directions.
3. **Lack of assistance:** People with disabilities often do not get the necessary help when exercising their right to vote, either from their families or election officials.(Rocha et al., 2010)

Efforts to Increase Participation

Several steps have been taken to increase the political participation of persons with disabilities:

1. **Political education:** Political education programs in SLB and disability communities help improve their understanding of the political process and the importance of participating in it.
2. **Assistance during elections:** Providing companions for people with disabilities when exercising their voting rights can help overcome the practical obstacles they face.
3. **Advocacy for inclusive policies:** Disability organizations encourage governments and political parties to implement policies that support the participation of people with disabilities, such as providing disability-friendly facilities and ensuring accessible information.(Fink et al., 1972)

Conclusion

Political education for people with disabilities is not only a right, but also a necessity to ensure their participation in political life and government. Through inclusive political education, people with disabilities can play a more active role in shaping policies that reflect diversity and promote social justice. Therefore, all government agencies, educational institutions, and the community must collaborate to achieve disability-friendly political education. Political awareness among people with disabilities is increasing, but challenges in terms of accessibility and support still hinder their participation to the fullest. Sustained efforts from the government, election organizers, and the community are needed to create an inclusive political environment and support the active involvement of persons with disabilities.

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