

Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Election: The Case of Regional Elections in Bantul, Indonesia

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Abstract

This article analyzes the involvement of disability groups in the regional election and how this will contribute to the upcoming 2024 General Election in Indonesia. Groups of people with disabilities often face discrimination, which hinders the realization of their rights as outlined in Law Number 8 of 2016 regarding Persons with Disabilities. Ensuring such rights are fulfilled is crucial for social progress and the welfare of individuals, particularly in democratic nations. The approach in this study uses the theory of political participation and the concept of human rights as a theoretical framework. Meanwhile, the research method is qualitative, with descriptive analysis to discuss the intended topic. The collection of research data was obtained from interviews and literature studies. This article examines the case study of the involvement of persons with disabilities in the 2020 Bantul Regional Election and its influence on the 2024 General Election. Bantul is a district in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province in that it has the largest population with disabilities. As a result, special attention is needed to ensure that the political rights of the disabled group in Bantul are guaranteed. The findings show several forms of involvement of disability groups in the previous elections in 2019 and 2020. The deficiencies in these elections should be addressed to improve access for disability groups making democracy inclusive. This article, then, contributes to the studies of the political participation of persons with disabilities in democracy in the context of regional elections.

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Key Words

Bantul regency, regional election, disabilities, general election

Abstrak

Artikel ini menganalisis keterlibatan kelompok disabilitas pada pemilihan kepala daerah (Pilkada) dan bagaimana hal tersebut memiliki kontribusi untuk Pemilihan Umum 2024. Kelompok penyandang disabilitas rawan diskriminasi sehingga pemenuhan hak penyandang disabilitas yang telah diklasifikasi dalam UU Nomor 8 Tahun 2016 tentang Penyandang Disabilitas menjadi indikator penting yang harus dipenuhi demi kemajuan sosial dan kesejahteraan masyarakat, terutama pada negara demokrasi. Artikel ini menggunakan teori partisipasi politik dan konsep hak asasi manusia sebagai kerangka teori dan metode penelitiannya adalah kualitatif dengan analisis deskriptif untuk membahas topik yang dituju. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dan studi pustaka. Artikel ini menggunakan studi kasus keterlibatan penyandang disabilitas pada Pilkada Bantul 2020 dan pengaruhnya pada Pemilu 2024. Bantul menjadi wilayah kabupaten di provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta yang memiliki penduduk disabilitas terbanyak. Dengan jumlah yang besar tersebut, tentunya dibutuhkan perhatian khusus dalam memastikan terjaminnya hak politik kelompok disabilitas yang ada di Bantul. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beberapa bentuk keterlibatan kelompok disabilitas pada penyelenggaraan pemilihan umum sebelumnya tahun 2019 dan 2020 serta kekurangan pada pemilihan ini mesti dijadikan bahan untuk membenahi akses kelompok disabilitas agar demokrasi yang semakin inklusif. Artikel ini berkontribusi dengan signifikan atas kajian mengenai partisipasi politik kelompok disabilitas dalam proses demokrasi melalui pemilihan daerah.

Kata-kata Kunci

Kabupaten Bantul, kelompok disabilitas, pemilihan umum, pemilihan kepala daerah

Introduction

Persons with disabilities are a group of people who need special attention and support from their surroundings. They are a vulnerable sub-group of society who are prone to be marginalized. Based on Law Number 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, there are five categories of disabilities: physical, intellectual, mental, sensory, and multiple/multiple. This law

emphasizes that persons with disabilities have the same rights as other members of society in all aspects of life, such as education, health, employment, and accessibility. A person with a disability is someone who experiences physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory limitations for an extended period so that in interacting with the surrounding environment, they may experience obstacles and difficulties in participating fully and effectively like other members of society, by obtaining the same rights. The complexity of the problem increases when persons with disabilities are ignored by the existing political structure which creates an inferior view among themselves. In addition, inadequate support from family and society is often an obstacle for persons with disabilities to develop.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), there were 22.5 million persons with disabilities in Indonesia in 2020. Meanwhile, Survei Ekonomi Nasional (Susenas) 2020 recorded 28.05 million people with disabilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) says the percentage of disabled people in Indonesia is 10 per cent of the total population, or around 27.3 million people. This figure shows that persons with disabilities are a significant group in Indonesian society who need support and attention from all parties. "We must accept that persons with disabilities have the same rights in society as others. It means recognizing their rights to education, work, and a decent living place," said Disability Activist, Stephen Hawking (2014).

One of the regencies or cities in Indonesia which has a large number of persons with disabilities is Bantul Regency. The number of community groups that fall into the category of disabilities in Bantul is still the highest in the province of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The number of people with disabilities in Bantul reached six thousand people in 2018, where the cause was the earthquake that occurred in 2006, which made many residents of Bantul experience disabilities due to the severe damage it caused. Geographical conditions and limited infrastructure in several areas in Bantul make accessibility for persons with disabilities one of the challenges that must be overcome. Therefore, efforts are needed to increase awareness and attention to the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in Bantul Regency.

The number of people with disabilities in Bantul Regency is significant to know how many groups of people are included in the disability category. It is necessary to make it easier for the authorities to provide assistance and obligations to these community groups. The information obtained from the data collected will help map in detail each sub-district in the Bantul

Regency where there are groups of people with disabilities so that from these data, the contribution of the Bantul Government to people with disabilities can be received on target. Table 1 shows the population based on gender and type of disability including physical disabilities, blind disabilities, deaf disabilities, mental disabilities, physical and mental disabilities, and other disabilities according to Kapanewon (Sub-District) in Bantul Regency in 2020 as reported by Satu Data Bantul.

No.	Kapanewon (Sub-District)	Physical Disabilities	Blind Disabilities	Deaf Disabilities	Mental Disabilities	Physical and Mental Disabilities	Other Disabilities	Total
1	Srandakan	17	4	16	13	13	7	70
2	Sanden	18	7	13	21	8	12	79
3	Kretek	25	11	20	30	10	24	120
4	Pundong	10	7	10	7	4	8	46
5	Bamban	28	8	13	27	6	11	93
6	Pandak	26	17	21	40	9	13	126
7	Bantul	26	16	22	40	3	10	117
8	Jetis	30	13	28	38	14	25	148
9	Imogiri	21	21	24	44	9	10	129
10	Dlingo	14	7	25	14	6	5	71
11	Pleret	7	6	5	20	8	6	52
12	Piyungan	35	16	29	39	13	13	145
13	Bangunt	36	24	36	47	7	15	165
14	Sewon	30	21	31	33	11	19	145
15	Kasih	40	16	27	39	14	42	178
16	Pajangan	7	6	17	16	11	1	58
17	Sedayu	18	3	17	28	7	9	82

Table 1
Population data for persons with disabilities in 2020 in Bantul Regency
Source: Satu Data Bantul

Table 1 shows that groups of persons with disabilities in each sub-district in Bantul Regency have a reasonably even distribution so that there are no sub-districts without groups of persons with disabilities in all aspects. The highest sub-district with groups of persons with disabilities is Kasihan Sub-District, with 178 persons with disabilities, and the lowest is Pundong Sub-District, with 46 persons with disabilities. Thus, on average, in each sub-district in Bantul Regency, there will be 107 groups of persons with disabilities in 2020. This figure is relatively high for a district where natural disasters are one of the causes. On the other hand, this population data can be compared with other districts in the Yogyakarta Special Region, such as Gunung Kidul Regency which has a higher number of people with disabilities with 7579 persons as seen in Table 2.

	Physical Disabilities		Blind and Deaf Disabilities		Psychotics & Retardation		Dual Disability		Child Disabilities		People with Disabilities	
Year	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Gunungkidul	2644	2554	1490	1566	2440	2440	467	467	550	549	7571	7579

Table 2
The Population of Persons with Disabilities in 2019-2020
in Gunung Kidul Regency

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS)

Based on the above data from Satu Data Bantul and the Central Bureau of Statistics, we think that in the two districts, the distribution of various groups of persons with disabilities is evenly distributed in the districts of Bantul and Gunung Kidul. In Bantul Regency, most people with disabilities are from the mentally disabled group spread across 17 sub-districts with a total of 496. Meanwhile, in Gunung Kidul Regency, most are in the physically disabled group, with 2554 in 2020. The data also show that at least three people with visual disabilities are in Bantul Regency, and there are 467 people with multiple disabilities in Gunung Kidul. These data will serve as a source of information on the services to be provided by the local government in providing proper access and opportunities for these groups. In addition, these population data provide information on challenges and needs to develop effective programs and policies to increase the quality of life for groups of people with disabilities.

As part of society, persons with disabilities have the same rights in many aspects as other citizens. When viewed from a democratic aspect,

persons with disabilities have the right to ensure that their rights are recognized and protected by the state and society. Likewise, persons with disabilities in Bantul can participate and contribute to the development of democracy. According to Aqilla (2022), this group should be able to become agents of change in society to ensure that their political rights are fulfilled. Disability groups can also enrich social-cultural diversity in Indonesian democracy. However, Rengganisa (2021) said that many obstacles still occur in the field, such as limited accessibility, discrimination, and a lack of understanding regarding political rights for the disability group itself, which has prevented the fulfilment of disability rights and participation. Thus, the cooperation of many parties is urgently needed, starting from the government, the wider community, and the disability group, to fulfil their rights and ensure recognition in all aspects, especially in the political implementation of the people of Bantul.

Bantul Regency is a district in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, which has the largest population with disabilities. With such a large number, special attention is needed to guarantee the political rights of the disabled group in Bantul. Thus, further analysis is needed to find out the extent of involvement of disability groups in politics, obstacles that occur in the field, and what efforts have been made by the Bantul city government regarding this problem. We argue that the participation of persons with disabilities in Bantul, especially in the political process, has increased but still faces obstacles, so more active involvement from all parties is needed in efforts to increase the political participation of persons with disabilities, especially in the 2024 General Election.

This study uses a qualitative method with descriptive analysis to examine the problems of persons with disabilities in Bantul ahead of the 2024 General Election. The primary data needed were obtained from official sources such as the websites of the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) and the Government of Bantul and through interviews with community leaders of persons with disabilities and political observers. In addition, secondary data were collected from several reliable sources such as journals, books, internet searching, and other trusted sites related to the research topic.

Political Participation Theory and Human Rights Concepts: Theoretical Frameworks

This study uses the theory of political participation and human rights as theoretical frameworks. According to Michael Rush and Phillip Althoff,

political participation is an action that citizens usually carry out to influence the process of making and implementing public policies and determining government leaders. All actions taken by citizens that affect the process of making and implementing public policies, including in the election of government leaders, can be categorized as political participation activities (Damsar 2010:181). Political participation has a vital role in maintaining the continuity of democracy and the system of government that applies in a country. This shows that political participation has a significant role in building and maintaining a democratic system in a country. People can voice their aspirations and views on government policies and programs through political participation. In addition, political participation can also help people understand and strengthen their rights and obligations as good citizens. By being involved in the political process, people can increase their awareness of the importance of their rights and obligations as citizens who actively participate in maintaining the stability and security of the country.

Political participation theory is used to analyze the involvement of persons with disabilities in political life in Bantul. However, persons with disabilities often face barriers to participating in political activities, such as limited accessibility or discrimination they experience. By using this theory, solutions can be found to increase the political participation of persons with disabilities, such as by strengthening their physical and social accessibility or by eliminating existing stigma and discrimination. In addition, an analysis of the political participation of persons with disabilities is also essential to ensure that their human rights, such as the fundamental right is the ability to engage in political activities., are met fairly and equitably. By ensuring more significant involvement of persons with disabilities in political activities, they can improve their quality of life and promote democracy and more inclusive public participation in Bantul and worldwide.

According to John Locke, human rights are inherent rights in individuals and cannot be taken or reduced by the government or other entities. Locke stated that these rights included the right to liberty, the right to justice, the property right, and the right to life. In the opinion of Oemar Seno Adji, the theory of human rights is a set of rights that every individual has based on his position as an independent and dignified human being. Adji emphasized that these rights include the right to freedom, the right to justice, the right to dignity, the right to welfare, and the right to a healthy environment. Based on the statement above, human rights are a set of rights

inherent to every individual based on his position as an independent and dignified human being, which includes the rights to freedom, justice, dignity, welfare, and a healthy environment.

Fulfilling human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities, is very important in running an exemplary democracy in Bantul. Without fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities, democracy in Bantul cannot work properly because they are an essential part of society and have the right to be recognized and respected. Fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities is also an important indicator of social progress and community welfare. If the rights of persons with disabilities are not fulfilled, they will experience discrimination, struggle to get equal access to participate in the democratic process, and struggle to participate in community development activities. Therefore, fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities must be a priority in implementing good democracy in Bantul so that everyone can benefit from a just and equitable democracy.

2020 Bantul Regional Election

The general election (Pemilihan Umum [Pemilu]) is a periodical process in which people elect a person to fill a political position and become a representative of the people in government. At the regional level, elections are called Regional Head Elections (Pemilihan Kepala Daerah [Pilkada]). Meliana & Suharno (2022) said that general elections and local elections are important forums for realizing people's sovereignty so the active participation of the community in the process is much needed. In the 1945 Constitution (Undang-Undang Dasar 1945), it is written that every citizen has the right and has the right to participate in elections and it is legally guaranteed.

According to Hastuti & Sunarso (2021), Bantul, during the last several periods, has always been a district with the highest political participation in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. From the data for the implementation of the 2020 local elections, Bantul Regency has the highest percentage in Yogyakarta compared to Sleman Regency, which is only 70%, and Gunung Kidul, which is 80.16%. This is shown by Bantul Regency which has a voter turnout rate of 80.32%. It was surprising that the Bantul Regency still has a high level of participation, even exceeding provincial and national targets, even though the implementation was carried out amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

However, Rengganisa, et al. (2021) stated that the participation of

groups of people with disabilities in Bantul in the 2020 Election was left behind. In general, it had increased compared to the previous elections. This happened because there were problems in the field starting from facilities and infrastructure that were not disability-friendly, limited accessibility, invalid data and maps of the distribution of persons with disabilities and the lack of outreach to the disability group regarding the importance of political rights and field officers who also not having full concern for vulnerable groups is the reason for the low participation of disabled groups.

General Election Commissions (KPU) of Bantul Regency, apart from carrying out technical improvement efforts, have specifically prepared a socialization strategy to avoid a decrease in people's political participation amid the COVID-19 Pandemic (Meliana & Suharno 2022). KPU Bantul anticipated this by utilizing the internet network and social media so that socialization could continue as before. The target audience for this strategy was first-time voters or young people who were more technologically literate. KPU Bantul also conducted limited face-to-face meetings with an offline distribution of 30% which was prioritized for residents who still needed more understanding of technology. The remaining 70% of the audience attended online. Based on these studies, we were interested in further studying the political participation of persons with disabilities in future political contests based on the conditions and problems in the 2020 Bantul Regional Elections.

Forms of Involvement of Persons with Disabilities in the Political Process in Bantul Regency

Persons with disabilities in the Bantul Regency could find many ways to exercise their rights as Indonesian citizens in a democratic system. The use of these democratic rights can be obtained by positioning persons with disabilities as proponents of government policies by advocating the aspirations of supporting the lives of people with disabilities and obtaining democratic rights as voters in elections and as legislative candidates. As an effort to propose government policies, groups of people with disabilities in Bantul Regency will be very useful in increasing opportunities for a more decent life with all the shortcomings they have. For this reason, as an implementation, there is a program that the Government of Bantul Regency has implemented to focus on empowering and fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities, namely a policy program called "Bantul Without Borders" which has a goal function to increase access to various aspects of

life, such as social, physical and economic for groups of people with disabilities.

In the effort to use their rights as citizens in Bantul, persons with disabilities have another role to play, namely as voters in elections. The right to vote is a universal right for all citizens, which is given equitably to all citizens who have obtained the right to vote per predetermined regulations stipulated in the 1945 Constitution. Thus, the involvement of groups of persons with disabilities in the political process in Bantul Regency was direct participation in the 2020 Pilkada which was facilitated with voting booths, special toilets, and ballots in braille. Thus, before the election, the government had collaborated with advocacy parties for persons with disabilities and NGOs regarding education and outreach to people with disabilities regarding the political election process and competition between candidates.

In addition, the involvement of persons with disabilities that KPU Bantul was carried out by opening opportunities for groups with disabilities to become officers of the Voting Organizing Group (KPPS) during the election and the recruitment of groups with disabilities to become election vote multipliers in 2019. The recruitment of the 2019 Election ballot officers in Bantul Regency from the disability groups empowered the disability group to get additional income from this job. This had a good impact on residents with disabilities considering there are minimal jobs that can empower disabled groups and support their economy.

Another possible effort can be made in the political process for groups of persons with disabilities in the Bantul Regency in the upcoming elections, such as the 2024 General Election so that increasing the level of democracy in the district can be done in various steps. We see several possibilities that can be carried out by KPU Bantul to boost participation from people with disabilities. The reason was, according to Istiqomah (2022) as the Commissioner of KPU Bantul stated that in the 2019 Election, that the level of use of the right to vote among people with disabilities reached 48,02% of the Final Voters List (DPT), which was is still relatively low. Table 3 shows the fixed voters list for the disability group in the previous two elections that took place in Bantul Regency and the realization of the use of voting rights.

Year	Number of Final Voter List	Number of Suffrage Users	Percentage
2019	1974	948	48,02%
2015	1151	368	31,97%

Table 3
The number of Final Voter List and the percentage of voting rights users in elections in Bantul Regency

Source: Harian Jogja

Hence, it would be an evaluation for KPU Bantul so that it could push harder to increase the percentage of people with disabilities using their voting rights. Possible steps that KPU Bantul could carry out as the organizer include improving supporting facilities and infrastructure, distributing outreach and education teams to the disabled community, and facilitating access to polling stations. Supporting facilities and infrastructure that are possible evaluation materials from KPU Bantul are adequate toilets, election papers for the selected candidates, and voting booths that are easy to use and access. Furthermore, the dissemination and education team to the community could be held in various associations for groups with disabilities by providing political, procedural, and technical education during the election to make it easier for all groups.

Challenges for Persons with Disabilities in 2020 Bantul Regional Election

According to Informant A, the head of the community of persons with disabilities, there were three main challenges in 2020 Pilkada in Bantul. The Voting Places (Tempat Pemungutan Suara [TPS]) had to be accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities. It was unacceptable that wheelchairs could not access these locations, ballot paper templates were not adapted to the needs of visually impaired individuals, and there was a lack of election-related pictures for people who were deaf or with hearing difficulty. These issues were expected to be addressed immediately to ensure everyone can exercise their right to vote without barriers or discrimination. The uneven natural topography was a different obstacle for persons with disabilities in accessing TPS. For instance, polling stations were located in areas with a 45-degree slope, making access difficult for persons with disabilities.

The second challenge was the lack of election outreach to persons with disabilities. It caused people with mental disorders or severe disabilities to lose voting rights. The third challenge was the lack of political representation for persons with disabilities. When legislative candidates were registered in Bantul in 2020, no column was available to record their status as persons with disabilities, thus becoming an obstacle in fighting for their rights and interests in government. In addition, there were no representatives of persons with disabilities who have served in the Provincial Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), and most political parties did not facilitate access for persons with disabilities to take part in general elections or local elections. Informant A said: "How can friends with disabilities be invited to be involved in political participation, especially in political representation? So far most political parties have only made them objects to get votes, for example, by offering attention to them" (Interview, 25 February 2023).

According to Amrurrobbi et al. (2021), the challenges of disability in elections in Indonesia include a) the potential for non-registration of disabled voters in the voter list occurs if KPU is not innovative in recording disabled voters; then there is a need for intense communication between Election Organizers and groups with disabilities; b) voter education has not been maximized, which has the potential to lead to low participation and understanding of persons with disabilities towards election information; and c) organizers must pay special attention to providing adequate support for voters with disabilities to access TPS; it is a crucial challenge that must be addressed.

In addition, Dwintari (2021) states that there are several challenges for persons with disabilities in elections in Indonesia, including (1) several TPS locations are inaccessible for persons with disabilities like narrow or blocked roads, inaccessible entrances or exits, and TPS equipment like voting booth tables or ballot boxes that are too high; (2) most persons with disabilities do not receive any information related to elections. Accessible media for persons with disabilities is minimal, and there is a lack of information; (3) TPS are usually not ready to serve persons with disabilities; (4) Indonesia's territory is so large that not all regions can optimally receive supervision, especially in rural areas and in underdeveloped and underdeveloped areas; (5) the lack of the role of the family in providing political education for family members with disabilities; (6) Persons with Disabilities who are still indifferent to the importance of their voices for elections.

Based on interviews with informants and previous research, there were

several main challenges in increasing the political participation of persons with disabilities in Indonesia. These included a lack of TPS accessibility, election socialization, political representation for persons with disabilities, and the potential for voters not to be registered persons with disabilities in the voter list. In addition, several TPS locations were inaccessible for persons with disabilities, most persons with disabilities did not receive information regarding elections, polling stations were not ready to serve persons with disabilities, the a lack of family role in providing political education for family members of persons with disabilities, and persons with disabilities who still did not indifferent to the importance of their vote in elections.

Strategies for Fulfilling the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Bantul for 2024 Election

In this study, it was found that there was no concrete data available regarding the political participation of persons with disabilities in Bantul for the 2024 General Election. However, several efforts were made by Bantul KPU in 2020 Pilkada and previous elections to increase access to political participation for persons with disabilities as follows:

1. Special voting booths: KPU provided special voting booths for persons with severe disabilities in the 2019 General Election. These voting booths had facilities that made it easier for persons with disabilities to participate in general elections, such as wheelchairs and special tables;
2. Special training for election organizers: KPU conducted special training on providing accessibility services for persons with disabilities. This training aimed to increase the awareness and skills of election administrators in providing better services for persons with disabilities during the general election process; and
3. KPU Regulation Number 13/2018: KPU issued KPU Regulation Number 13/2018 concerning Voters' Rights with Disabilities in General Elections, which provides guidelines and rules for election administrators to provide accessibility for persons with disabilities. This regulation covers various aspects, such as accessibility facilities, training for election administrators, and access to political information for persons with disabilities.

According to Informant B, the government still pays little attention to the political participation rights of persons with disabilities. This is related, among other things, to equal access to political information, the right to vote in general elections, the right to be involved in the political process,

and so on. He said: “The facts and reality are like that, people with disabilities are still marginalized and classified as a second-class society. Even though they are also citizens who must be prioritized in the context of being able to participate”(Interview, 10 May 2023).

Furthermore, Informant B stated that in Bantul, persons with disabilities need the same access as others to engage in social activities, including political participation. As a community that is often neglected in the political process, increasing the political participation of persons with disabilities can help improve the diversity of views in decision-making processes that impact their lives. Therefore, the attention of the Government of Bantul Regency to the political participation rights of persons with disabilities can help improve conditions and promote social inclusion. He said: “[Persons with disabilities] need to be allowed to become officials in the executive, become candidates for members of the legislature and the judiciary. [Especially], for those who have the capacity, ability, and integrity to compete with other people” (Interview, 10 May 2023).

The Government of Bantul Regency can consider several actions to increase the political participation of persons with disabilities. For example, they can improve accessibility to polling places and political forums, and ensure that necessary facilities and infrastructure such as accessibility facilities and technological assistance are available for persons with disabilities. In addition, the Government of Bantul Regency can also strengthen campaigns to increase awareness and political participation of persons with disabilities. Thus, the political participation of persons with disabilities can improve the quality of decision-making and strengthen social inclusion in society.

According to a source on the Ministry of Law and Human Rights website for the Special Region of Yogyakarta (2021), the Social Service Office of the Bantul Regency Government has not fully paid attention to the rights of persons with disabilities. It is evident from the lack of complete data on persons with disabilities in the area. The existence of complete and accurate data on persons with disabilities is an essential first step to ensuring that their rights are fulfilled. These data become the basis for the government to plan and provide the access and services needed by persons with disabilities. Therefore, the lack of completeness of the data owned by the Social Service of Bantul Regency Government shows that they have not fully paid attention to the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.

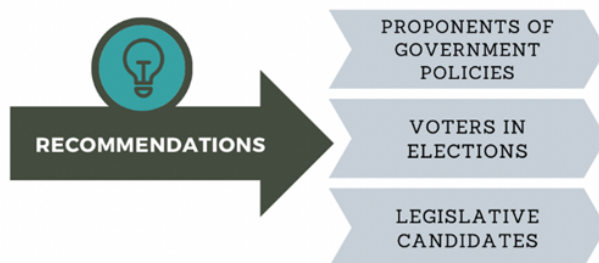


Figure 1
Recommendations for improving the political participation of Persons with Disabilities

Source: Processed by researchers from various sources

Based on our findings, we recommend some strategies for the Indonesian government, especially the Government of Bantul Regency, to fulfil the political rights of persons with disabilities. Firstly, as a policy proponent, the government needs to encourage active and equitable participation of persons with disabilities in the government policy-making process, both at the national and local levels, such as through providing physical and information accessibility, involvement in public consultations, and providing sufficient space for aspirations and the needs of persons with disabilities. Then, the government must take a holistic and sustainable approach to existing policies and programs, by evaluating their impact and effectiveness on the welfare and rights of persons with disabilities and adjusting them periodically according to evolving needs and challenges. The next step that needs to be taken by the government is to form a particular team or institution that involves persons with disabilities in preparing strategic plans and government work programs and focuses on specific issues in the field of disability. There is a need to provide equal and easy access for persons with disabilities to obtain information and experience needed to strengthen their ability to propose policies, such as through training, guidance, as well as the provision of funds, and other resources.

Second, as facilitators of elections, the government must provide physical accessibility at polling places, such as ramps, elevators or stairs, that are safe and easily accessible for persons with disabilities. Then, the government must provide training and socialization for election officials to serve voters with disabilities well and understand their needs. Then, there is a need to develop voting technology that is easily accessible and can be

used by persons with disabilities, such as voting machines that can be operated with buttons or voice commands. In addition, the government must provide easily accessible information for voters with disabilities, such as information about voting locations, their rights as voters, and the candidates to be elected. Finally, there is a need to carry out campaigns specifically targeting voters with disabilities, such as through social media, television advertisements, or special events that raise issues relevant to persons with disabilities.

Third, the Indonesian government, especially the Bantul Regency Government, can ensure that political parties and candidates for legislative members provide adequate facilities and accessibility for persons with disabilities in the nomination, campaign and election processes. It can be done by strengthening regulations and guidelines that ensure fairness and equality for all candidates, including persons with disabilities. Bantul Regency Government can also provide training and support to persons with disabilities who wish to run for office to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to participate in the political process.

The Government of Bantul Regency needs to pay attention to the special needs of persons with disabilities to ensure their political participation in the 2024 Elections and other political activities. In addition, efforts to improve accessibility and provide easily accessible information for persons with disabilities are also important things to do. Therefore, the government must ensure these rights are recognized and protected for all citizens, including persons with disabilities. The government must also pay attention to the special needs of persons with disabilities and improve accessibility for them. It is one of the efforts to ensure human rights for persons with disabilities in meeting their political participation needs.

Impacts of Active Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Politics in Bantul

Bantul Regency has the highest percentage of political participation and has the largest population of persons with disabilities in the province of Special Region of Yogyakarta; it has the potential to become a representative area that has a high awareness of the political rights of persons with disabilities if these aspects are appropriately utilized. One of them is that the massive political participation of persons with disabilities can be compared to their representation in government affairs which is more accommodated.

According to Nasution & Marwandianto (2019), the representation of disabled groups in the legislature is a concrete manifestation of efforts to

fulfil political rights, which are not only limited to being voters but also actors who can realize their aspirations and real needs in the form of policies. They also said that in the context of Human Rights, groups with disabilities should have become a component that must be included in strengthening the order of a democratic country. The wide opening of space for persons with disabilities to participate in government and politics means that the guarantee of legal and human rights protection for every citizen and the implementation of the democratic system in Indonesia is going well. The political participation of persons with disabilities can also encourage inclusion and equality in society. Rahmanto (2019) argues that if people with disabilities show their existence in politics, it will be possible for politicians to compete in pushing for the formation of various policies that support disability because they are considered to have the potential to benefit the masses. Unfortunately, even though the participation of disabled groups has quite a positive impact, they still face structural and cultural obstacles from the government, society, or even their group.

Rengganisa et al. (2021) stated that many persons with disabilities experience discrimination, for example, when they want to participate in the election process or political campaigns. From the data obtained, this problem was compounded by accessibility which was still very limited because not all voting places or places for public discussion could be accessed by groups with disabilities, which caused them not to be able to fully participate. Lastly, the obstacles for persons with disabilities to participate were exacerbated by the stigma and the view that their deficiencies would prevent them from effective participation. For this reason, the problems that occurred in the 2020 Bantul Regional Election should be taken seriously for evaluation by the government and related officials so that the participation of persons with disabilities in the upcoming 2024 general elections can increase and these groups in politics are truly represented.

Conclusion

The article has shown that persons with disabilities experienced obstacles and difficulties in fully participating in politics and obtaining their rights just like other members of society. Fulfilling human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities, is very important in running democracy and an important indicator of social progress and community welfare. As one of the cities in Indonesia that had a large number of persons with disabilities, Bantul was a city in the Special Region of Yogyakarta province with the largest population with disabilities. Concerning political

participation, the Bantul regional election, over the past several periods, has always been a district with the highest political participation in the province. However, the rate of participation of groups of people with disabilities in Bantul in the 2020 election was low, although, in general, it has increased compared to the previous elections.

This was due to the problems in the field including facilities and infrastructure that were not disability-friendly, limited accessibility, invalid data and maps of the distribution of persons with disabilities, the lack of outreach to the disability group regarding the importance of political rights, and field officers who were concerned a lot with vulnerable groups. The political participation of persons with disabilities could promote inclusion and equality in society, but many persons with disabilities experienced discrimination when they wanted to participate in the election process or political campaigns. This problem was due to the limited venues or public discussions that could be accessed by this group making them find difficulties in getting equal access to participate in the democratic process and take an active role in community development.

In facing the 2024 elections, the Government of Indonesia needs to immediately improve the election implementation system to make it more accessible for persons with disabilities. It is hoped that in the future, there will be a democracy in Indonesia, especially in Bantul Regency, which is full of equality and justice, both for those who are normal and for those with disabilities. Opening a vast space for persons with disabilities to participate in government and politics means that guaranteeing legal protection and human rights for every citizen and implementing the democratic system in Indonesia is going well.

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