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The Analysis of the Participation of People with Disabilities in the 2017's Regional Election in Bireuen District, Aceh, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: People with disabilities have not been given the maximum opportunity to participate in an Election. This research was aimed at finding out the factors influencing the motivation of 4.73% of the voters with disabilities who participated in the 2017's Election in Bireuen, and the factors contributing to the low participation of 95.27% of people with disabilities registered to vote in the 2017's Election in Bireuen District; and this also aimed at finding out the efforts which can be made to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the next Elections in Bireuen District. To achieve these objectives, the Authors used Political Participation Theory and Voter Behavior Theory. This research utilized a qualitative descriptive method. The results of this research showed the factors affecting the motivation of people with disability who participated in the 2017's Regional Election in Bireuen District include the awareness of the right to vote; family support; politics education conducted by the Organizers of the Elections in Bireuen District; and figures who developed into political contestants. Some solutions for the participation of disabled people increased in subsequent elections, namely: maximizing the accessibility of the Elections to disability and the adjustment of socialization programs based on the type of disability exist in Bireuen Regency.

KEY WORD: Elections; Disabilities; Participation.

RESUME: "Analisis Partisipasi Penyandang Disabilitas pada PEMILUKADA 2017 di Kabupaten Bireuen, Aceh, Indonesia". Penyandang disabilitas belum secara maksimal memanfaatkan peluang untuk ikut serta dalam mensukseskan PEMILU (Pemilihan Umum). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui faktor yang mempengaruhi motivasi 4.73% penyandang disabilitas yang berpartisipasi, dan faktor yang mempengaruhi rendahnya partisipasi yaitu sebesar 95.27% penyandang disabilitas, serta solusi yang perlu ditempuh agar partisipasi penyandang disabilitas dapat meningkat pada PEMILUKADA (Pemilihan Umum Kepala Daerah) selanjutnya di Kabupaten Bireuen. Untuk menganalisis permasalahan dalam penelitian ini, Penulis menggunakan Teori Partisipasi Politik dan Teori Perilaku Memilih. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi motivasi penyandang disabilitas berpartisipasi dalam PEMILUKADA di Kabupaten Bireuen tahun 2017, antara lain: kesadaran penyandang disabilitas terhadap hak memilih; dukungan keluarga; sosialisasi pendidikan politik yang dilakukan oleh Penyelenggara; dan figur peserta calon kepala daerah yang maju menjadi peserta PEMILUKADA. Terdapat beberapa solusi agar partisipasi penyandang disabilitas meningkat dalam PEMILUKADA selanjutnya, yaitu: memaksimalkan aksesibilitas PEMILUKADA terhadap pemilih disabilitas dan penyesuaian program sosialisasi berdasarkan jenis disabilitas yang disandang oleh pemilih.

KATA KUNCI: Pemilihan Umum; Disabilitas; Partisipasi.

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INTRODUCTION

To develop a system and implementation of a democratic General Election, which respects political aspirations and human rights, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution, the General Election needs to accommodate all people's aspirations based on the principle of democracy, i.e. direct, public, freedom, confidentiality, honesty, and fairness. Votes of all eligible people are counted equally. This right to vote cannot be transferred, and all votes are protected by law, including voters with disabilities (Papasi, 2010; Basrowi, 2014; Kumolo, 2015; Nadya, 2016; and Gustomy, 2017).

People with disabilities are recognized in Law No.8 of 2016 regarding people with disabilities, and Article 1 defines people with disabilities as anyone with physical, intellectual, mental, or sensory limitations within a long period of time, which gives them difficulty in interacting effectively with other people. Political rights of people with disabilities include rights to vote and be voted in a public position, rights to give aspiration in written or orally, rights to choose political party or individual in a General Election, and rights to establish and to be a member or official of a people with disability organization. They also have rights to represent people with disabilities in national and international level, participate actively in a General Election system, have access to facilities and infrastructure of a General Election, and receive political education (UGM, 2015; Rahadian, 2017; and Tamba, 2017).¹

As for political rights, people with disabilities have not maximally received the opportunity to participate in politics and government. In the 2017's Regional General Election, the participation of people with disabilities in Aceh was only 37.85%. The number of people with disabilities, in the final voters list, who cast their votes was only 913 persons (*cf* KPU, 2017; Tamba, 2017; and ODIHR, 2019). See table 1.

Based on the table 1, Bireuen District accommodated the lowest number of voters with disabilities in the 2017 Regional Election. The number of voters with disabilities in the final voters list was 1,078 persons, but only 51 people (4.73%) cast their votes. Thus, around 1,027 people with disabilities did not use their rights to vote (KPU, 2017; and Warsidi, 2017).²

The low participation of people with disabilities did not discourage 4.73% of other voters with disabilities in Bireuen District to participate

¹See also, for example, "Jutaan Penyandang Disabilitas Absen dalam Pemilu dan Pemilukada" in *BBC News Indonesia*, on January 2015. Available online also at: https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2015/01/150129_indonesia_difabel_pemilu [accessed in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, March 11, 2019]; and "Law of the Republic of Indonesia, No 8 of 2016, regarding People with Disability" in *TIRTO.ID*. Available online also at: <https://tirto.id> [accessed in Banda Aceh, Indonesia: March 13, 2019].

²See also, for example, "Indonesia Election 2019: All You Need to Know" in *BBC News*, on 12 April 2019. Available online also at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47729119> [accessed in Banda Aceh, Indonesia: April 1, 2020].

Table 1:
The Number of People with Disabilities in the Final Voters List in Each District
in Aceh Province, Indonesia

No	District	Number of Voters with Disabilities
01.	Bireuen	1,078
02.	Aceh Besar	448
03.	Aceh Selatan	101
04.	Simeulue	76
05.	Lhokseumawe	74
06.	Aceh Tenggara	66
07.	Aceh Barat Daya	63
08.	Aceh Jaya	58
09.	Aceh Timur	53
10.	Aceh Singkil	45
11.	Banda Aceh	42
12.	Pidie	42
13.	Nagan Raya	39
14.	Pidie Jaya	34
15.	Aceh Barat	30
16.	Langsa	28
17.	Aceh Tengah	24
18.	Aceh Utara	24
19.	Aceh Tamiang	23
20.	Bener Meriah	23
21.	Gayo Lues	13
22.	Sabang	13
23.	Subussalam	12
Total		2,409

Source: KPU [Komisi Pemilihan Umum], 2017.

in the 2017's Aceh Regional Election. Regardless of their limitation as people with disabilities, they cast their votes in the Regional Election, because they consider it as a media for changes in policies which can benefit them as people with disabilities.

People with disabilities have not optimally participated in politics, because the regulation which guarantees their rights has not maximally implemented. However, as the citizens of Indonesia, they have a high sense of nationalism to participate in the Regional General Election, which is the responsibility of all the citizens, including people with disabilities (Nadya, 2016; Pawestri, 2017; Yandra, 2017; Sabatini, 2018; and Sustikarini, 2019).

To improve the participation of all people in every Election is the duty of government, which guarantees the rights of all people so that they can easily participate in an Election without any obstacle. Thus,

people do not only fulfill their responsibility, but they also receive their political rights (Damsar, 2010; Duverger, 2010; Mas' oed, 2011; Sitepu, 2012; Basrowi, 2014; Muhammad, 2016; and UMY, 2016).

Based on the problems discussed above, this paper reports the results of the research study regarding the participation of people with disabilities in the 2017's Regional General Election in Bireuen District, a district in Aceh Province, Indonesia. The objectives of this study were: (1) to find out and describe factors which motivated the participation of 4.73% people with disabilities in the 2017's Regional General Election; (2) to find out and analyze the factors contributing to the low participation of people with disabilities in the 2017's Regional General Election; and (3) to identify solutions in order the participation of people with disabilities improve in the future Regional General Elections.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized a descriptive qualitative method. Because this research is a descriptive study, it explored and clarified phenomena or social facts by describing the variables related to the problem being investigated. It was also quantitative, because it dealt with cause and effect relationships from the variables based on a scientific framework without any mathematical calculations. The sources of the data were primary data obtained from interviews; and secondary data collected from books, journals, and newspapers. The data were collected using interview documentation and library research (Sugiyono, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Bryman, 2014; and Aminah & Roikan, 2019).

The informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, where the sample was selected by considering the purpose of the research, because a purposive sampling technique is based on purposes and research problems in a population (Prastowo, 2011; Herdiansyah, 2012; Sugiyono, 2012; Creswell, 2013; and Gunawan, 2013). Based on some considerations, the informants selected are presented in the table 2.

The data were collected using interviews and documentation. Firstly, the interview is a process of obtaining information or data for the research by asking questions in person between the interviewer and respondents. The interview techniques used in this research was the unstructured interview, where the researchers could ask questions to the informants without any prepared guideline. Informants who were considered to have knowledge regarding the research problem were interviewed using the in-depth interview to extract accurate

Tabel 2:
List of Informants

No	Informants	Positions
01.	Agusni, S.P., M.Si.	Head of Bireuen Independent Election Commission.
02.	Wildan Zacky el-Ahmady, S.T.	Commissioner of Bireuen Elections Supervisory Agency.
03.	Hamdanil	Head of Indonesian Disabled Persons Association in Aceh.
04.	Iqbal Ahmady, S.I.P., M.I.P.	Academician.
05.	Mansur Izuddin	Head of Indonesian Disabled Persons Association in Bireuen.
06.	Nurul Asma	Person with Disability in Bireuen District.
07.	Taufik	Person with Disability in Bireuen District.
08.	Nurasiah	Person with Disability in Bireuen District.
09.	Ahyar Efendi	Person with Disability in Bireuen District.
10.	Ifwan Sahara	Former Head of Indonesian Disabled Persons Association in Aceh in 2018.

and comprehensive information required in the research. The researchers also used an audio recorder to capture the interview for data analyses. Secondly, the documentation study was a method to collect information through written sources, such as archives, books, theories, laws, and other forms of documents related to the problem in the research. The documentation study was intended to find out and analyze documents written or compiled by research subjects or others, and it is one method of obtaining overview in the point of view of the subjects (Prastowo, 2011; Herdiansyah, 2012; Sugiyono, 2012; Creswell, 2013; and Gunawan, 2013).

The data were analyzed based on the following procedures. Firstly, the data which had been collected was summarized and selected because the data was abundant, and not all data could be used for the purpose of the present study. Secondly, the data were analyzed descriptively to arrive at a conclusion as the result of the study. The analysis was conducted descriptively, where the data was reorganized and interpreted, so the data could be used to answer the research question. Thirdly, the analysis result was verified for its credibility, and a summary was made. Finally, fourthly, the final data analysis was checking the validity of the data and making a final conclusion (Creswell, 2013; Gunawan, 2013; Bryman, 2014; and Aminah & Roikan, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Motivation of People with Disabilities to Participate in the 2017's Regional General Election in Bireuen. The implementation of the

Table 3:
The Effect of Political Stimulants on the Motivation of People with Disability
to Participate in the Election

No	Political Stimulants
1.	<i>Internal Stimulants:</i>
	1.1. People with disability themselves.
	1.2. Family.
2.	<i>External Stimulants:</i>
	2.1. Election Independence Commission.
	2.1. The figure of Irwandi Yusuf.

Regional General Election in a democratic country is marked by the fact that all the citizens who are eligible to participate in an Election have the rights to be involved in political activities, including people with disabilities. Based on the Theory of Participation, there are some factors which influence reasons to participate in an Election, such as the factor related to the stimulant of political participation. This suggests that openness and sensitivity toward political stimulants through personal and organizational contacts and through mess media can influence the participation in political activities (Putra, 2015; Gustomy, 2017; Restuida, 2017; Febriantanto, 2019; and Silvi, 2019).

The case among people with disabilities in Bireuen shows that there was acceptance for political stimulants, which helped and assisted people with disabilities in participating in the 2017's Regional Election. In this case, the stimulants were provided by close relatives and Election Organizers. See table 3.

Based on the table 3, there are some factors which influence the motivation of people with disabilities. Firstly, family support significantly affected the motivation of people with disabilities to use their votes in the Regional General Election. In the past, families of people with disabilities were reluctant to disclose their family members with disabilities. People with disabilities were also not confident to participate in political activity, because they considered that their participation did not have any benefit for them.

However, they have now discovered that, based on the law, they have the same right as others. This factor made the families of people with disabilities to motivate their family members with disabilities to participate in political activities in the government. Therefore, the role of families in assisting, supporting, and motivating them could change their confidence to participate in the Election.

In addition to family support, the Election Organizers, i.e. Election

Independence Commission, also provided support for people with disabilities to participate in the Regional General Election. The commission provided political education, informed them of the law which guarantees the rights of people with disabilities, and taught them how to cast their votes. There are some types of disabilities, including blind, deaf, quadriplegic, speech impaired, and mental disabilities. Therefore, Election Independence Commission also gave an opportunity for non-governmental organizations to take part in socializing political education for people with disabilities in the 2017's Regional Election. The commission also funded the organizations which took part in political education. As a result, the number of voters with disabilities who participated in the Election increased.

Political participation is an activity influenced by some factors. There are two important variables which influence the number of participations in politics. The first variable is political awareness of government (political system), which is the awareness of rights and responsibilities as a citizen, such as political rights, economic rights, legal protection rights, economic responsibility, social and other responsibilities (Surbakti, 2010; Sitepu, 2012; Schur, Kruse & Blanck, 2013; Oppyfia, 2017; and Schur, 2017).

The research results showed that the socialization activities conducted by Election Independence Commission and NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) regarding political education and the explanation regarding laws which guarantee equal rights, the people with disabilities understood that they did not only the same rights but also the same responsibilities as other citizens. Casting votes in a Regional General Election is a part of the rights, where the votes given by people with disabilities are counted equal, and it is a responsibility for all citizens to determine the future government administration. The awareness among people with disabilities regarding their rights and responsibilities as a citizen made them active voters, because they use their rights to vote. One vote determines who is the leader and their quality. People with disabilities need leaders who make policies which benefit people with disabilities.

Votes given also represent the people's assessment of the ongoing government administration implementation. If the majority of the people vote for the incumbent, it can be treated as an appreciation for the previously elected government administrators. Meanwhile, low votes can be an indication that people complained about the way the government performs. The research results showed that the majority

of the people with disabilities in Bireuen voted for Irwandi Yusuf – Nova Iriansyah in the 2017's Regional Election, because they were considered to have performed better than the incumbents; and it was an appreciation for Irwardi Yusuf, because he often supported people with disabilities, so that it attracted them to vote for Irwandi Yusuf – Nova Iriansyah.

In line with the Theory of Voter Behaviorism explains that a community has been clustered based on their social background and characteristics; and, thus, to understand the social characteristic is important in understanding the political behavior of individuals. Background of a person or a group covers gender, social class, race, ethnics, religion, occupation, ideology, and origins is an independent variable which determines decision in voting. There were six candidates in the 2017's Regional Election, i.e. Tarmizi Karim – Machsalmina; Zakaria Saman – Alaidinsyah; Abdullah Puteh – Sayed Mustafa; Zaini Abdullah – Nasaruddin; Muzakir Manaf – T.A. Khalid; and Irwandi Yusuf – Nova Iriansyah.

From the six candidates, Irwandi Yusuf was a strong candidate in Bireuen District, because Bireuen was his hometown, so the characteristics of race, ethnic, and ideology of origin were established. The shared background influences people in Bireuen, including people with disabilities, and determine the winning votes for Irwandi Yusuf. His educational background was also a determining factor among people with disabilities.

The educational background of Irwandi Yusuf – Nova Iriansyah could also influence the policies they made. Irwandi Yusuf has also been elected Governor of Aceh for the period of 2007-2012. If education level and occupation background are combined, the policies they issued would be better. The policies he made during his previous terms of office still gave benefit for the people, so his previous experience influenced the people, including people with disabilities, to vote for him.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that family and the role of Election Independence Commission in providing political education, supported by NGOs, to explain about laws which guarantee the rights of people with disabilities and provide access to the Election has made people with disabilities aware that they had equal rights in politics. In addition, the figure of Irwandi Yusuf in his candidacy for Governor in 2017 became a stimulant for people with disabilities, because he was originally from Bireuen.

The Low Participation of 95.27% of People with Disabilities in the

Table 4:
Number of Voters in Bireuen District

Number of voters		
Male	Female	Total
143,885	154,883	298,718

Source: KPU [Komisi Pemilihan Umum], 2017.

Table 5:
Number of Voters with Disabilities in Bireuen District

Number of Voters with Disabilities:					Total
Quadriplegic	Blind	Deaf and Speech Impaired	Mentally Disabled	Other Disabilities	
344	128	188	297	121	1,078

Source: KPU [Komisi Pemilihan Umum], 2017.

2017's Regional General Election in Bireuen. People with disabilities still faced many obstacles in exercising their rights as citizens, because of a lack of attention from the government institution which deals with the rights of people with disabilities in various sectors, including politics. In the 2017's Regional Election in Bireuen District, the participation of people with disabilities was still not well-perceived in the community. People with disabilities were often ignored by leaders, policymakers, or election organizers. Table 4 shows the number of eligible voters; and table 5 presents the number of eligible voters with disabilities in Bireuen District.

From table 5, the number of voters with disabilities was so small that their participation in the Election was not considered significant by General Election Organizers. This is against the principle of democracy. Their votes are more significant than who was elected or how many votes they get.

Based on the analysis of Political Participation Theory, the countries which embrace democracy, each citizen is rightful to participate in any political decision, because each political decision made and implemented by the government deals with and affects the lives of every citizen (Cholisin & Nasiwan, 2012; Efriza, 2012; Rahayu, Dewi & Ahdiyana, 2013; and Gustomy, 2017).

The research results show that there were some factors which could result in low political participation of a person, i.e. social status, occupation, education, etc. Another factor was economic status, i.e. the position of a person in the community as a result of property ownership. A person with high social and economic status does not

only have good political knowledge, but they also have high interest and concern in politics and government. The research results show that the majority of people with disabilities had medium to low economic and social status. The limitation they had, such as physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory limitations for a long period of time, made them have a lower hierarchy in the community.

The research results also show that differences in the types of disabilities were considered an obstacle for the Election Organizers, because not all organizer members understood how to communicate or interact with people with disabilities. For example, the blind use template braille, the procedure of which the organizer often could not understand. For the deaf, they often communicated using sign language, which was not familiar for either members of the Polling Station Working Committee or Election Supervisors. In addition, the self-confidence of people with disabilities made them unmotivated to vote. All these problems resulted in the level of participation among people with disabilities in Bireuen District. The limitation of the people with disabilities had affected their attendance and participation in every Election.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the low participation of 95.27% of people with disabilities in the 2017's Regional Election in Bireuen was caused by the fact that their participation was considered taboo in the community and ignorance by leaders, policymakers, or Election Committee. The neighborhood which established social hierarchy considered social and economic status a determinant in performing social activities. Differences in social status can create differences in behavior accepted by the community such as disabilities, which caused a lack of self-confidence among people with disabilities.

Solution to Improve Participation of People with Disabilities in Every Regional Election in Bireuen District. To ensure that the Election is conducted with integrity, commitments of all stakeholders, including the dedication of the Bireuen Election Independence Commission in providing facilities for people with disabilities to use their political rights. People with disabilities should be prioritized by Election Independence Commission to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the next Election. One of the access for people with disabilities is the availability of a polling station intended for people with disabilities, because it is crucial for the Election. Without proper access to the polling station, the participation of people with disabilities will not be improved.

Table 6:
Solutions to Increase the Participation of People with Disabilities

Maximizing Accessibility:
01. Doing home visit for polling.
02. Providing special polling station (with specific officials to interact with people with disabilities).
03. Adjusting socialization activity based on the type of disabilities.

It is a political motivation which can increase the interest and attention of people with disabilities to participate in the political sector. The research results show that a solution to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the Regional Election in Bireuen should be preventive efforts, which need to be made by the organizers of the Regional Election as presented in table 6.

From table 6, the voters with disabilities will be more motivated to participate in the Regional Election in Bireuen if they are provided with better accessibility by the organizers, such as better access to information regarding the Election, political education related to the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and simulation of the polling process. In addition, the Election Organizers can also provide more services to people with disabilities, such as visiting each person with a disability because some of them could not visit the polling station, due to their limitations. The organizers should ensure that home visit is possible and, if it is impossible, a special polling station is set up for people with disabilities, so they can be gathered in one place where they are assisted by members of Election Committee who understand how to interact with them.

Access made available by the Election Independence Commission needs to follow the socialization program. The socialization provided by the Election Independence Commission needs to consider the type of disability. Every form of disability is unique in the way the people receive the information. For example, the deaf need to be presented with the information in the form of videos or short movies. People with speech impaired problem need speakers using a sign language.

The openness and sensitivity of a person toward political stimulants through personal contact, organizational contact, and mass media will influence participation in political activities. The political stimulants such as home visit and individualized socialization should be provided by the Election Organizers to increase the participation of people with disabilities (Riddle, 2014; Ishak, 2015; Lasida, 2017; and Lestari & Arumsari, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The political stimulants provided to the people with disabilities could improve their motivation to participate in the 2017's Regional General Election. The first stimulant was related to their own attitude and support provided by family members. The second stimulant came from the Election candidate and the role of the Election Independence Commission, which provided socialization and access for people with disabilities.

The low political participation among people with disabilities in the 2017's Regional Election was caused by social backgrounds, such as differences in social and economic status which resulted in low interest in political activities and low self-confidence. To increase the participation of people with disabilities in the future Regional Election, stakeholders should be committed to guaranteeing the rights of people with disabilities to participate in political activities, easy access to the polling station, and special treatment for all people with disabilities in every future Election.

Based on the research results, some recommendations can be provided. Firstly, the Election Organizers for the Regional General Election in Bireuen should pay more attention to the rights of people with disabilities to motivate them and increase their participation, such as by using better methods of socialization. Secondly, the chairmen of the polling station working committee need to take training on how to interact with the disabled in order that they can provide better support for the disabled on the Election Day. Thirdly, people with disabilities should increase their participation in political activities and in government at the local and national levels by joining stakeholder groups or attending campaigns.³

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³*Statement:* We, undersigned, declare that this article is our own academic work, it is not the result of plagiarism, and has never been sent, reviewed, and published by another scientific journals. All the sources that we quoted in the analysis, we included correctly and completely in the Reference list. We also will not withdraw this article, if it has passed the review and be published in the *SOSIOHUMANIKA* journal in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. Thus, we make this statement seriously and responsibly.

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