

# Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the 2016 Supplementary Regional Heads Election of Manado City in 2016

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**Abstract**— *This research aims to find out how political participation of persons with disabilities in terms of their involvement in the Manado City aftershocks general election in 2016 which requires political participation from the entire community, including participation of persons with disabilities who are often regarded as minorities. This study used a qualitative research method with descriptive analysis conducted in Manado City and the Office of the General Election Commission of Manado City. The data used in this study are primary data and secondary data. Data collection in this study was conducted with three main activities, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that persons with disabilities in Manado City only actively participated in politics in voting activities during regional elections. According to persons with disabilities, the political participation they do by voting on polling day is an easy political participation activity. In addition, the intensity of political participation of persons with disabilities in Manado City is at the category level as an observer. In increasing political participation of persons with disabilities in the city of Manado, it can be done by providing special socialization for persons with disabilities according to their type of disability, disability-friendly polling stations, and special ballot facilities for persons with disabilities.*

**Keywords**— *Political Participation, Persons with Disabilities, Election*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The general election is a vital element to maintain the values of democracy and is also a means to uphold the sovereignty of people to elect those who will represent them in the administration. Regarding people's participation in the general election, Manado City became one of the municipalities that held a simultaneous regional head election in 2015.

The election of Regional Head of Manado City as simultaneously scheduled with other regions on December 9, 2015, however, was postponed and could be finally held on Wednesday, February 17, 2016.

The regional head elections are intended to optimize the potential for the exercise of popular sovereignty and be done directly by qualified citizens in local administrative regions. Regional head and deputy of the regional head

election at the provincial level is to elect the governor and vice governor, regent and vice-regent at the regency level, as well as to elect mayors and vice mayors at the municipality level, as stated in article 1 paragraph (1) of the Law No. 8 of 2015. The regional head election is held by the provincial General Election Commission (KPU) and the KPU in regency or municipality. In the Regional Heads of Manado City Election, it was surely expected the participation of all citizens, including the participation of persons with disabilities who also had the same rights as other citizens in exercising their political rights. Persons with disabilities are also part of Indonesia who also has the same rights, status, and role as regulated by Law No. 8 of 2016.

Regarding the voting rights of voters with disabilities, it is undeniable that persons with disabilities are still very difficult in using their voting rights in general elections. As a matter of fact, the rights of persons with disabilities in politics have been protected by law. In this case, the Law Number 8 of 2016 Regarding Persons with Disabilities Article 13 has set about political rights for persons with disabilities, one of which is to provide equal rights and opportunities to participate in politics in general elections. The political participation of persons with disabilities in question included: 1. the right to vote and be elected; 2. the right to be able to channel political aspirations both written and oral; 3. Electing political parties and/or individuals participating in general elections; 4. To establish, become a member, and/or administrators of community organizations and/or political parties; 5. Form and join organizations of persons with disabilities and to represent persons with disabilities at the local, national and international levels; 6. Participating actively in the electoral system at all stages and/or parts of the organization; 7. Obtaining accessibility on the facilities and infrastructure for holding general elections, electing governors, regents/mayors, and electing village heads or other names; and 8. Obtaining political education. Political participation of persons with disabilities should not be limited to voting only, but persons with disabilities can also actively participate in other political activities.

In the 2016 regional head elections of Manado city, there were 173 persons with disabilities in 11 districts

registered as voters on the Manado Permanent Voter List. From the 173 disability voters in Manado City, not all of them participated to cast their votes. Through the certificate of recapitulation of the results and details of the vote count in the election of the mayor and deputy mayor of the City of Manado aftershocks in 2016, it is known that only 146 voters with disabilities who participated politically cast their votes on polling day. Apart from participating in voting activities on polling day, persons with disabilities can also participate in politics through the activities of forming and joining interest groups, as well as participating in campaign activities (Abramson and Hardwick in reference [1]).

The term political participation itself has been used in various senses relating to behavior and attitudes in politics. Reference [2] in his book *Political Participation in Developing Countries* interpret political participation as a free citizen activity aimed at influencing decision making by the government. Political participation as an activity of citizens acting as individuals, is intended to influence government decision making. Participation can be individual or collective, organized or spontaneous, steady or sporadic, peaceful or violent, legal or illegal, effective or ineffective or ineffective.

Understanding political participation according to reference [3], political participation is the participation of ordinary citizens (who do not have the authority) in influencing the process of making and implementing political decisions. The next understanding according to reference [4], political participation is the activity of a person or group of people to participate actively in political life, among others by choosing the leadership of the state and directly or indirectly influencing government policy (public policy). These activities include actions such as voting in elections, attending general meetings, contacting or lobbying with government officials or members of parliament, becoming party members or one of the social movements with direct action and so on.

In the reality of community life in our environment, it turns out that not all members of the community are willing to participate in political activities. Only a handful of people voluntarily participate actively in political activities. Meanwhile, the number of people who do not want to participate in political activities is quite large, even those who avoid political participation, or only participate in the lowest levels [5].

The forms of political participation of citizens can be seen from the political activities that occur. The political activities themselves can be in the form of citizen participation in the process of making political decisions, participating in voting in elections, also taking up positions both in the political and government world.

According to reference [3], participation is seen from the activity categories which are divided into active participation and passive participation. Included in the category of active participation is to propose a general policy, propose alternative public policies that differ from the policies made by the government, submit criticisms and improvements to rectify the policy, pay taxes and elect regional leaders. On

the other hand, those included in the category of passive participation are activities that obey the government, accept and carry out any government decision. In other words active participation means activities that are oriented to the process of political input and output, whereas passive participation is an activity that is oriented towards output activities.

According to Abramsom and Hardwick in reference [1], political participation is divided into two forms, namely conventional political participation and non-conventional political participation. Conventional political participation is political participation in accordance with applicable rules or constitutions. Conversely, non-conventional participation is political participation that is not in accordance with the applicable rules or constitution.

According to reference [3] there are two important factors that influence the level of one's political participation, namely: 1. One's political awareness: this factor includes awareness of the rights and obligations of citizens. For example political rights, economic rights, and the right to obtain legal guarantees, etc. 2. Assessment and appreciation of the government: This factor relates to how the community evaluates and appreciates the government, both on government policies and on government implementation.

In addition there are also other factors that are driving the emergence of citizen participation in political life, Milbrath [5], suggests four main factors that encourage someone to participate in political life, namely: 1. The presence of political incentives; 2. Personal characteristics of a person; 3. A person's social characteristics; 4. The situation or political environment itself.

David F. Roth and Frank L. Wilson in [6] outline the forms of political participation of citizens based on the intensity of their activities, namely: 1. Activists: Basically the level of political participation at the level of activist categories such as political officials and leaders of political parties or interest groups are political actors who have a high intensity in participating politics. They have strong enough access to contact with government officials, so that efforts to influence government policy making are very effective; 2. Participants: Participation at the level of the participant category is like being a campaign officer, being an active member of a political party, an interest group, and being active in social projects. At the level of the participant category it was found that the higher the level of one's political participation, the higher the intensity and the smaller the scope. Conversely the more downward, the smaller the intensity and the greater the scope of coverage; 3. Observers: Political participation at the observer category level such as attending general meetings of party members / interest groups, voting in elections, discussing political issues, and following political developments through the mass media. These activities are examples of activities that are mostly carried out by citizens. This means that the scope of the number of people involved is high; 4. Apolitical: a group of citizens who are not involved in political activities at all. Those who fall into this category tend not to care about anything related to politics. If the citizens'

political participation activities are leveled, they form a triangle that resembles a pyramid which is then known as the pyramid of political participation. Because like a pyramid, the majority of citizens' political participation lies at the bottom. This political participation pyramid can be applied in assessing and analyzing the political participation of citizens in the activities of general elections, regional and village head elections.

According to reference [7] that what is meant by disability is that there is a physiological, anatomical, or psychological deficiency caused by injuries, accidents, or birth defects and tends to persist, with the word handicap, referring to the obstacles experienced by individuals when he seeks to do everyday tasks, which are caused by these deficiencies. Another understanding of disability is according to reference [8], that disability is an incomplete condition, both physically and mentally, while handicap is the obstacles experienced by an individual when he tries to exert his maximum ability but is hindered by the conditions he experiences. Disability or commonly called disability is a term that encompasses disruption, limited activities and restrictions on participation. The disorder referred to here is the limitation of bodily functions or structures. These limitations in carrying out activities are the difficulties faced by individuals in carrying out their duties and actions. Limiting participation is a problem experienced by individuals in the involvement of life situations. Disability is also a complex phenomenon that reflects the interaction between the characteristics of one's body and the characteristics of the community in which they live. Disability has several types and can occur during a person's lifetime or since the person was born into the world. The types of disabilities [9] include the following: Persons with physical disabilities: a. Blind is a person who is hampered by mobility of motion caused by loss / loss of visual function as a result of birth, accident or disease; b. Deaf / speech is a disability as a result of the loss / disruption of the hearing function and or speech function both caused by birth, accident or disease, consisting of: hearing impaired speech, hearing impaired, speech impaired; c. Disability / physical disability is a member of the body that is incomplete due to congenital birth, accident, or due to diseases that cause disruption of mobility concerned. Disability means a state of damage or disturbance, as a result of disruption in shape or obstacles to the bones, muscles and joints in its normal function. This condition can be caused by illness, accident or can also be caused by the nature of birth [10].

According to reference [11], the general election is a real manifestation of the participation of the people or citizens in the life of the state, so what is important for us is to pay attention to the extent of the people's awareness to participate in state life. Haryanto further stated that essentially elections are an opportunity for citizens to elect government officials and decide what they want the government to do and in making that decision the citizens determine what they really want to have. Furthermore according to reference [12], argues that elections are a sign of the will of the people in a

democracy, with the general election of a country calling itself a democracy in the true sense.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. In this qualitative descriptive study, the researcher provided a systematic, factual and accurate description of the facts that are in accordance with the scope of the research title. This qualitative descriptive study was used to analyze the data obtained clearly and in detail about the political participation of persons with disabilities in the supplementary regional elections of Manado City in 2016 through its forms of participation. This research was based on the object of research, namely persons with disabilities in the city of Manado, which was focused on the forms of participation during the supplementary regional head elections of the city of Manado in 2016. To be able to find data on how political participation of persons with disabilities, this study was conducted by selecting research locations in Manado City and Manado City Election Commission (KPU) Office. With a research process that went through the stages of preparing proposals, mentoring stages, then stages of research and came at a thesis examination conducted from November 2018 to February 2019. In this study, researchers used informants of persons with disabilities in the City of Manado and the Commissioner and Secretariat of the Manado City KPU, which was considered to know in-depth about various matters relating to the problems in this study, so as to provide information and the data needed to address problems in research related to the political participation of persons with disabilities in the election of regional heads in Manado City in 2016. With consideration of data needs, time and cost, the informants interviewed in this study were: people with disabilities in Manado City 10 people, secretariat of the Manado City KPU 2 people, and commissioners of the Manado City KPU 1 person.

According to reference [13], data is all information or information related to the research objectives. While the source of data, according to Lofland in qualitative research is words, and actions, the rest are additional data such as documents and other things [14]. Reference [15] states that in qualitative research, data collection is done in a natural setting. When viewed from the data source, the data collection can use primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources were data sources that directly provide data to data collectors, and secondary sources are sources that did not directly provide data to data collectors. Primary data: data that has been obtained directly from informants using data collection techniques in the form of direct interviews. In this study, the interview technique was carried out by giving a number of questions related to the issue / main problem in the research to the informants; and secondary data: data obtained based on documents, records, profiles, official archives, and other relevant literatures in completing primary research data.

The data analysis process was carried out since entering the research field. This analysis process was carried out to understand the background of conducting research and the preparation of researchers, entering the research location and the object of research on the political participation of persons with disabilities in the elections of the supplementary regional head of the City of Manado in 2016. Data collection techniques can be done by observation, interview (interview) is a dialogue conducted by the interviewer with a complete set of detailed and detailed questions such as those included in structured interviews [16], and documentation. In general, reference [17] assume that the analysis consists of three activities that occur simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions / verification.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reference [2] interpreted political participation as a free citizen activity and aimed at influencing decision making by the government. The forms of political participation according to Abramsom and Hardwick which are part of political participation can be seen from the political activities of the citizens themselves. These activities can be in the form of activities to form and join interest groups, campaign activities, and voting. Based on the forms of participation above, political participation can be shown based on intensity. David F. Roth and Frank L. Wilson explained that political participation based on the intensity of its activities can be in the form of the lowest intensity, namely political participation only as an observer, medium intensity, namely as a participant, and the highest intensity is as an activist, and there are also those included in political participation as apolitical who are not involved in political activities at all.

Concurrent regional head elections held on 9 December 2015 in Manado City could not be held according to schedule. It is due to the postponement of regional head elections in Manado. The regional head general election in Manado could finally be held on June 17, 2016. The results of the election in Manado City was the election of candidates for mayor and deputy mayor of the city of Manado on behalf of DR. Ir. Godbless Sofcar Vicky Lumentut, SH., M.Sc and Mor Dominus Bastiaan as Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the city for the period of 2016-2021. With the election of Dr. Ir. Godbless Sofcar Vicky Lumentut, SH., M.Si and Mor Dominus Bastiaan as the mayor and deputy mayor of the City of Manado cannot be separated from the role of persons with disabilities who participated in the election.

Based on the results of study conducted through the description of research objects and characteristics of the informants, the researchers would discuss 3 (three) forms of political participation, as follows:

#### 1. Establish and Join the Interest Groups

A group of people who establish a specific purpose organization try to influence the government policy process. Interest groups usually compete with other interest groups.

Interest groups do not try to control the government, whereas they only want to influence government policy. Interest groups play very great role in democracy even interest groups are in fact more influential in making decisions than formal (formal) decision-making institutions. It happens because in reality, the influence of individuals in the decision making process is very small. Thus, to satisfy their needs, the individuals will join forces into a group of interests. Therefore, an effective way to fight for interests is to join together to form interest groups. It is more effective if the group can have a pressure group.

In this study, researchers found that persons with disabilities, who were informants in this study, lacked interest in participating in interest groups because they had difficulties in engaging in these interest groups. However, there were also people with hearing impairment / speech impairments and persons with disabilities who joined disability groups or other political organizations. The involvement of persons with disabilities to participate in interest groups or political organizations can also be said as a form of their participation to be directly involved in the democratic process that directly or indirectly influences public policy. It is certainly in accordance with the form of political participation put forward by Abramsom and Hardwick [1], which includes forming and joining interest groups.

#### 2. Campaign Activities

Campaign activities are an important part of election activities. Most persons with disabilities also knew the purpose of the campaign activity itself, was to provide information about elections and information about the vision and mission of the candidates for Mayor and Deputy Mayor, so that they could attract the sympathy from the voters. There were various ways in which candidates for Mayor and Deputy Mayor could attract the sympathy of the community as well as the sympathies of persons with disabilities. Some of the techniques of campaign activities namely, a campaign could be carried out from one house to another house with a successful team of prospective election participants asking directly to the community the problems they were facing. In addition, there were also direct mass campaign techniques by attracting the attention of the masses such as marches, art shows and so on. The campaign usually presents entertainment stars both singers and celebrity artists in open campaigns, conducting social services, and providing assistance for the construction of places of worship, so these matters could also attract the attention of voters, especially those with disabilities.

People with disabilities who participated in the campaign activities in this study were 2 (two) persons with disabilities out of 8 (eight) persons with disabilities interviewed. Persons with disabilities who participated in campaign activities were apparently still few in number. The reason for persons with disabilities for not participating in campaign activities was the lack of friendly access to campaign activities for them.

#### 3. Voting (voting)

The political participation of persons with disabilities in the voting activities in Manado City had been very good. From the research that has been done, people with disabilities in Manado were very understanding and aware that their voices were needed to determine the welfare of the community, especially the welfare of persons with disabilities. They were also very enthusiastic to participate in the voting conducted in the city of Manado. Despite the fact, the regional head elections in the city of Manado experienced a long delay, but it did not dampen their desire to participate by giving their voting rights at the polling station.

In addition to the high enthusiasm of persons with disabilities in the voting process, they also acknowledged the various facilities provided by administrators in helping them to vote at the polling stations. The voting conducted by persons with disabilities in this study was very good. In this case, of the 10 people with disabilities that researchers met, there were 8 (eight) persons of them who enthusiastically gave their voting rights in the 2016 elections for the city of Manado.

In this study, apart from persons with disabilities who exercised their voting rights on polling day, the researcher also interviewed 2 (two) persons with disabilities who did not participate in politics, especially in voting activities. In the interviews with these informants, researchers got an idea of the reasons why they did not want to participate politically to vote on polling day. The disabled persons stated that the reason for them not to vote was that the TPS access provided to them was difficult to reach because there was a TPS made on the second floor of a building. This made it difficult for people with physical disabilities and blind people to arrive at polling stations. Another reason for their absence was because they felt that they had no interests, and whoever the candidate they elected would not bring any benefit for them. So according to them, they better worked to make money rather than going to vote.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

1. Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the City of Manado in the Election of Regional Heads of Manado City in 2016 was classified as active participation and included conventional forms of political participation, namely by establishing and joining interest groups, participating in campaign activities, and voting on polling day. The factors that influenced political participation of persons with disabilities in the Regional Heads Election of Manado City in 2016 were one's political awareness and factors of evaluation and appreciation of the government, but the most prominent factor in this study was a person's political awareness factor. Political Participation of persons with disabilities in the Election of Regional Heads of Manado City in 2016 was included in the intensity of political participation as an observer, which was like voting in general elections. The intensity of activities to

join and form interest groups and also the intensity to participate in campaign activities is still lacking. In carrying out their political participation there are also obstacles for persons with disabilities in exercising their voting rights. These obstacles include the unavailability of special ballots for persons with disabilities and the location of polling stations that are less accessible for them.

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