
The Role of Inclusive Political Education for Persons with Disabilities in Realized Equal Political Participation in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

People with disabilities who have physical, mental, and emotional limitations often face discrimination and negative perceptions, resulting in unequal political participation and disparities between them and other members of society. The objectives of this article are 1) to describe the important role of inclusive political education for people with disabilities in achieving equal political participation and 2) to analyze the various challenges and obstacles in inclusive political education for people with disabilities in achieving equal political participation. The method used is a literature review, with data sources including books, journals, and supporting websites. Inclusive political education is in line with the diversity of Indonesian society, especially for persons with disabilities as a marginalized group. Inclusive political education will ensure that everyone has equal opportunities without discrimination by any group, including persons with disabilities. Several aspects that need to be considered in inclusive political education for people with disabilities include detailed and interactive modules, interesting and accessible methods, adequate facilities and infrastructure, experience-based learning, extensive and regular discussion forums, and cross-sector collaboration. High political participation among people with disabilities will ensure their equal status with other members of society.

Keyword: disability; equal political participation; inclusive political education.

INTRODUCTION

People with disabilities are included in the vulnerable group who often experience poor treatment in social life. Vulnerable groups are groups of people who experience physical, mental, and social limitations, making it difficult for them to access basic services and requiring special assistance from the state, other individuals, or the community (Siagian & Subroto, 2024). People classified as vulnerable groups have the right to receive greater protection from the state to guarantee security and comfort so that they are not discriminated against, harassed, ridiculed, or given negative labels due to the limitations they experience. As explained in Law No. 39 of 1999 Article 5, paragraph (3), concerning Human Rights, every person who belongs to a vulnerable group has the right to receive enhanced treatment and protection.

People with disabilities have the same rights as other citizens, including the right to education. One aspect of education that remains suboptimal and requires attention for people with disabilities is political education. Many previous studies have discussed the political education of people with disabilities, yet their level of political participation remains very low and has not achieved equality. Research conducted by Susanto & Basuki (2023) regarding the optimization of political education through digital literacy for people with disabilities in Industry 4.0 in Indonesia shows that optimal political education influences the political participation of people with disabilities in this context. Optimal political education can occur if they are able to utilize digital literacy and social media effectively. Another study by Widjaja

(2025), which compared the political participation of people with disabilities in various countries, shows that their political participation still tends to be low. Efforts to increase participation can be made through regulations, improved accessibility, inclusive political education, and collaboration between governments and disability organizations. Research by Sari (2025) also highlights the challenges faced by people with disabilities in political participation, such as accessibility barriers, discrimination, minimal socialization, and the need for inclusive political education.

Political education is one way to educate citizens in a democratic country, enabling them to exercise their rights, foster critical thinking, participate actively, and monitor every policy formulated by the government. Political education is not only obtained through formal institutions but also through informal channels, supported by print and electronic media, and other means. Political education is essential in Indonesia's democratic system to promote political participation. This participation is not merely a formality that fulfills citizens' obligations but a medium to create equal political participation for all, including people with disabilities.

Political participation emphasizes citizen awareness and involvement in both conventional and non-conventional political processes. Equal political participation is characterized by equal opportunities without discrimination, ensuring that no one is marginalized or prioritized. In practice, however, people with disabilities face several challenges, such as accessibility limitations, discrimination, minimal socialization, and a lack of inclusive political education (Sari, 2025). The low political participation of people with disabilities is a global phenomenon, as reflected in research by Widjaja (2025), which demonstrates that low participation persists in many countries. Efforts to increase it must be implemented with integrity through regulations, improved accessibility, inclusive political education, and collaboration between governments and disability organizations. Data from the General Elections Commission (KPU) reveal that the total number of people with disabilities who were prospective voters for the 2024 Election was 1.1 million, while those included in the Permanent Voter List (DPT) amounted to only 264,594 (dataindonesia.id, 2024).

Inclusive political education plays a strategic and crucial role in creating equal political participation for people with disabilities, who often lack confidence in participating in political processes and experience discrimination in their environments. People with disabilities have the same political rights as other citizens. Therefore, they should be protected and given greater attention by the state to gain a comprehensive understanding through *inclusive political education*—education that prioritizes justice, diverse perspectives, and the active involvement of the entire community without discrimination. Establishing such education poses various complex challenges; however, if implemented optimally, *inclusive political education* will foster equal participation within society.

Based on previous research, there has been limited discussion regarding *inclusive political education* for people with disabilities to realize equal political participation. The purpose of this paper is to describe the important role of *inclusive political education* for people

with disabilities in realizing equal political participation and to analyze the various challenges and obstacles that exist in this process. Therefore, the essence of this study is to foster equal political participation for people with disabilities through the role of *inclusive political education*, considering that people with disabilities often experience mistreatment and are not prioritized in political activities because they are perceived as incompetent and in need of special assistance. The foundation of *inclusive political education* is expected to empower people with disabilities by providing them with the opportunity and equality to engage in political participation in Indonesia, as a democratic nation.

METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature review method. The literature review informed readers about the results of previous studies, which were then linked to the current research to provide complementary insights (Cresswell, 2021). The data sources consisted of books, journals, and credible internet sites related to the research topic. The findings were presented in descriptive form, providing an in-depth explanation of the role of inclusive political education for people with disabilities in realizing equal political participation. This method was selected based on its relevance to the research objectives and its ability to produce accurate and structured findings.

The research process began with the collection of relevant sources from trusted journals, books, and websites as supporting data. After gathering these materials, the researcher conducted a critical and comprehensive reading of all sources. The reviewed data were then recorded and analyzed to obtain coherent and academically reliable results. The analytical method used was descriptive analysis, which aimed to present and interpret the collected facts systematically (Habsy et al., 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The role of inclusive political education for people with disabilities in realizing equal political participation

Political education in Indonesia has long been implemented to foster an understanding of citizens' political rights, their role in political participation, and to develop attitudes and skills in political life. The process of political education requires ongoing evaluation and adaptation, given the relatively low level of political participation among certain groups, such as people with disabilities. Political education must adapt to complex social changes and dynamics. Political education plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between citizens and fostering a strong and critical political awareness within the community (Lubis, 2023). The impact of education is primarily understood as enhancing human capital, providing skills that enhance participation, such as cognitive abilities, civic skills, and civic orientation (Kam & Palmer, 2015). Education provides cognitive abilities and political information, both of which enable individuals to understand politics. Therefore, based on previous research, the development of political education is necessary to address the disparity in political participation in Indonesia.

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Inclusive political education is appropriate, considering the diverse conditions of Indonesian society, especially for people with disabilities as a marginalized group. People with disabilities face limitations in various activities, including political participation, which leads to their under-prioritization in public policy. This negatively impacts opportunities for equal political participation.

Inclusive political education prioritizes the local context and the diversity of Indonesian society, ensuring acceptance and integration by all segments of society. Inclusive political education ensures that everyone has equal opportunities without discrimination against any group, including people with disabilities. Inclusive political education is a means of reducing inequality in political participation (Mii et al., 2023). Freire's theory of political education addresses not only the government system but also the dynamics of power, justice, and citizen rights. Freire's political education focuses on vulnerable and marginalized groups. The desired political participation involves the participation of all citizens, regardless of background or group, to reach decisions that reflect the common interest. The voices of these vulnerable and marginalized groups are crucial for creating social justice and strengthening democratic legitimacy (Rona et al., 2024).

political education emphasizes the principles of fair access, diversity of perspectives, and active involvement of all members of society without discrimination (Erfain, 2025). Inclusive political education is a comfortable, safe, and friendly place without limitations based on age, gender, economic status, and so on. Education based on inclusivity will be based on everyone without exception having equal learning opportunities and breaking down long-rooted inequalities. Inclusiveness exists to create a more just, directed, and democratic society. Through activities labeled inclusive, it provides broad opportunities for communities that were previously ignored or did not have fair access at all. The role of inclusive political education needs to be supported by several aspects to achieve success among people with disabilities. Several things that need to be considered in the implementation of inclusive political education are:

1. Detailed and interactive modules

People with disabilities have limitations in understanding, vision, hearing, and movement. A detailed module should at least cover the main aspects according to Fariji, et al (2024: 1438-1439) including 1) understanding rights and obligations, focusing on political rights such as the right to vote and be elected, the right to receive special treatment when voting at a polling station, and obligations as citizens. 2) government processes and structures, providing knowledge about how the government system functions, including the structure of government institutions, policy-making, and the election process. 3) political involvement, encouraging individuals to actively participate in political activities, such as general elections and political parties, as well as in community organizations. 4) political information analysis, discussing how to critically analyze and evaluate political information to make better decisions. 5) principles of justice and democracy, facilitating an understanding of the importance of social justice, human rights, and democratic principles in everyday life. 6) leadership development, equipping

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individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead and contribute to society. The module serves as a general guide for people with disabilities to understand various materials, learning objectives, and is equipped with critical questions to make learning more interactive.

2. An engaging and accessible method

Engaging methods will foster a strong interest among people with disabilities in understanding political education broadly and deeply. Equally important, the methods implemented can be used by everyone without difficulty adapting or requiring special assistance. The best methods are those tailored to the needs and objectives of each subject. These methods include project-based learning (PjBL), problem-based learning (PBL), role-playing, lectures, and demonstrations.

3. Adequate facilities and infrastructure

Adequate facilities and infrastructure are essential for supporting the learning process of people with disabilities who experience various limitations. Therefore, they must be supported by supporting facilities and infrastructure in inclusive political education to ensure rapid understanding. Visual aids such as flipcharts, posters, infographics, and video simulations can be used to facilitate understanding. Current technological advances, if viewed positively, will facilitate the learning process of people with disabilities in political education.

4. Experiential learning in the field

Inclusive political education isn't just about memorizing and understanding, but also about elaborating on the experiences of people with disabilities in the field. This also builds confidence in people with disabilities, who often face negative stigma in society.

5. Extensive and regular discussion forums

Discussion forums are held to allow people with disabilities to share stories based on their experiences. These forums also broaden their perspectives, honing critical thinking, empathy, public speaking, and self-confidence. These forums should, of course, be held regularly and not just once. The learning process cannot be done just once; therefore, repeated sessions, such as forming small groups of 4-5 people, are more conducive.

6. Cross-sector collaboration

Inclusive political education requires support from the government, political parties, the General Elections Commission, and relevant communities to motivate people with disabilities to participate and ensure their political rights are optimally exercised. Cross-sector collaboration will provide a diverse, competent pool of mentors who understand the needs of people with disabilities.

This is done to train critical thinking skills, political communication, and active participation awareness. Inclusive political education also has clear benchmarks, including: 1) written and oral tests to measure both knowledge and attitudes towards participation (Erfain et al., 2025); 2) observation and self-assessment to measure involvement or participation; 3) evaluation is the final part to identify areas that need to be corrected or enhanced. Inclusive political education will impact individuals with disabilities by increasing self-confidence,

public involvement, and broadening their knowledge. Education provides benefits that can naturally increase participation, leading to political activity.

Inclusive political education raises awareness of the importance of active participation by people with disabilities as a means of accommodating their aspirations. Creating equal political participation, even though people with disabilities are considered vulnerable and marginalized, is a form of social justice in a democratic nation. Inclusive political education is an effort to increase people's political knowledge so they can participate optimally in the political system, in accordance with the concept of popular sovereignty or democracy, which requires people to be able to carry out their participatory duties. Political education as an effort to shape humans into responsible participants in politics according to Yuliandari, et al (2023:193) the objectives of political education are as follows: 1) a means to build national character. 2) a means to build public awareness for politics. 3) a means to form political party cadres, so that political parties have cadres of quality and integrity. 4) a means to internalize the Pancasila ideology.

Inclusive political education can elevate the role of vulnerable groups, and is able to increase political knowledge, political skills, critical political awareness, responsibility, active participation, and political ethics that apply in Indonesia by adhering to the values of Pancasila and the Constitution . Equal participation will open perspectives and perspectives for all levels of society, eliminating the need to disparage people with disabilities in various aspects of life. Equal participation embodies the fifth principle of Pancasila, social justice. This concept of equality opens opportunities for all groups to have access without any disparities for certain groups. Therefore, quality political education will strengthen the capacity of civil society to carry out various functions such as oversight, mediation, and community empowerment (Bako et al., 2025).

Challenges and obstacles to inclusive political education for people with disabilities in realizing equal political participation

People with disabilities have been legally protected in terms of political rights, this can be seen through several legal products, including Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities in Article 13, which states that there are political rights which include the right to: 1) Choose and be elected to public office; 2) Channel political aspirations both written and verbal; 3) Choose political parties and/or individuals who are participants in general elections; 4) Form, become members, 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) Participate actively in the general election system at all stages and/or parts of its implementation; 7) Obtain accessibility to facilities and infrastructure for holding general elections, gubernatorial elections, regents/mayors, and village head elections or other names; 8) Obtain political education.

In the implementation of inclusive political education for people with disabilities, there are still many challenges and obstacles to achieving equal political participation. Not all groups in society have equal access and opportunities to participate in the political process, one of

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which is the group of people with disabilities, who often face many obstacles in exercising their political rights (Stum, 2021). The level of political participation of people with disabilities, especially in developing countries, is still very low, and their participation tends to be rejected and their rights denied (Bah, 2022). The concept of equality is not always the same, therefore, several aspects require special attention in inclusive political education to support people with disabilities in fully participating in the implementation of democracy. The obstacles and challenges in inclusive political education to achieve equal participation are as follows:

1. Personal factors

Personal factors relate to individuals with disabilities who feel inferior, lack internal motivation, and feel shamed by their families, leading them to withdraw. Personal factors enter the internal realm and become the main obstacle for individuals with disabilities to actively participate in political or other activities. Individuals with disabilities who receive full support from family, friends, and the community tend to have greater self-confidence and be able to participate in political activities (Widjaja, 2025). The low interest of individuals with disabilities in the implementation of inclusive political education will significantly impact and become a major task to raise awareness of their existence. If participation is not carried out, this political right will be abused by some parties for certain benefits.

2. Structural factors

Structural factors include external issues of people with disabilities that require external encouragement so that inclusive political education can have an impact on creating equal participation, namely:

a. Infrastructure and facilities that are not disability friendly

Disabilities are classified into several types: physical disabilities, mental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, sensory disabilities, and multiple disabilities, which involve more than one limitation. The participation of people with disabilities in politics and elections is hampered by various factors, generally stemming from institutional, social, cultural, physical, infrastructural, and economic factors (WFD, 2019). These various types of disabilities naturally also have different infrastructure and facilities required during the inclusive political education process. Adequate infrastructure and facilities will facilitate access for people with disabilities to obtain coherent and clear information.

b. Incompetent facilitator

Facilitators or instructors in political education must understand the needs of people with disabilities. Facilitators possess several skills to support success, such as understanding sign language, Braille, a strong sense of empathy, and the ability to communicate effectively with people with disabilities. Facilitators who lack technological expertise can use technology as a learning aid or medium.

c. Minimal funding from the government.

The government, as the holder of power, should be fully involved and present to provide moral and material support. Inclusive political education certainly requires significant funding

to meet the needs of every person with disabilities. Adequate funding will significantly contribute to the successful and smooth implementation of inclusive political education.

Inclusive political education, if implemented over a long period, can increase public understanding and build positive perceptions of the ability of people with disabilities to become leaders (Rizki et al., 2025). Inclusive political education is highly relevant to the dynamic political landscape. Indonesian society is very diverse in social, economic, physical, and ability backgrounds, so inclusive political education is needed to increase political participation as a manifestation of public sensitivity, concern, and love for political products in the form of public policy. High political participation of people with disabilities will make their position equal to other community groups without disabilities and eliminate various disparities. Comprehensive equality data is needed to monitor and enforce the rights of people with disabilities (Chaney, 2017). The active participation of people with disabilities has a far broader impact, not only providing rights but also making a valuable contribution to a democracy that is religious and represents the diversity of society (Dirkareshza, et al., 2023). Equal participation begins with a clear, targeted, and quality approach to inclusive political education for people with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

Inclusive political education in Indonesia represents a progressive approach to fostering equal political participation, especially for people with disabilities, by emphasizing fairness, diversity, accessibility, and community involvement within the framework of Pancasila and the Constitution. It serves as a platform to reduce inequality, promote political awareness, and empower vulnerable groups by providing safe and inclusive learning environments that encourage responsibility and active participation. Effective implementation requires interactive modules, accessible methods, adequate facilities, and cross-sector collaboration, while challenges persist in both personal factors—such as low motivation and self-confidence—and structural issues like inadequate infrastructure, limited government funding, and untrained facilitators. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term effectiveness of inclusive political education programs and developing adaptive models that strengthen accessibility and participation among diverse disability groups across Indonesia.

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