

Democracy Mirror: Voter Participation Increasing or Decreasing? The case of the 2020 Pandeglang Regional Election in the Middle of Covid 19

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Abstract

This paper discusses the increase or decrease in voter participation in Pandeglang Regency in the 2020 Pemilukada amid the exposure to Covid-19, as a reflection of the essence of democracy in Indonesia. The approach used in this paper is qualitative, with descriptive analysis techniques. The results of the discussion concluded that the electoral participation in Pandeglang Regency in the Regional Head General Election of December 9, 2020, increased even though it did not match the figures targeted by the Pandeglang KPU. This assessment is considering its implementation in the middle of Covid-19 and the floods that hit Pandeglang. Also the figures achieved were higher than the achievements of the previous regional head elections in 2015.

Keywords: Democracy Mirror *Pandeglang Regional Election during the Covid-19 Period*

A. Introduction

Voter participation in holding Regional Head Elections in Indonesia is an issue that is often discussed by politicians, observer, election organizer and public, considering the relations with the number of people present to vote at the polling station (TPS). One of the efforts to increase voter participation is political socialization (Riska Rahmat Laila, Efendi, Ichwan Agus, 2020). In a democratic political climate, the position of voters' votes is very important in realizing the political life of citizens in the regions. The benchmarks for the success of democracy in the implementation of Regional Head Elections are seen from the activeness of the community in political activities such as voting honestly without any pressure to vote in the regional elections. To increase public participation, it is necessary

to have a conducive atmosphere so that all efforts and socialization that will be carried out run accordingly to the goal, of increasing voter participation.

Among the areas that have problems with voter participation is Pandeglang Regency. It has been noted that voter participation in the holding of the previous Regional Head Election and General Elections is as follows: Voter participation in the 2015 Regent and Deputy Regent Election in Pandenglang Regency was 56%, then in the 2017 Governor and Deputy Governor Election it was 68%, and the 2019 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election was 78%. (KPU Pandeglang Regency, 2019). This data shows that voter participation in the Regional Election of Pandeglang Regency is low. So that in his press statement the Chairperson of the Pandeglang Regency KPU seemed to have made a strong effort to increase voter participation, stating "I hope that public participation in 2020 will be higher and even reach 86%" (Ahmad Sudha'i, in his press statement, Sunday, 15 December 2019).

There are no noble ideals without obstacles. In the midst of the busyness of the community, both those who are directly or indirectly involved in organizing the Regional Head Election in Pandeglang Regency, in March 2019 Indonesia was shocked by an outbreak of a virus that endangered human lives. So that all government policies, both central, regional and village governments, undergo changes, including the implementation and technicality of Regional Head Election which will be carried out simultaneously in Indonesia.

Based on the background description of the problem above, this paper will discuss how the Implementation of Regional Head and Deputy Regional Head Elections by the General Election Commission of Pandeglang Regency, to increase voter participation in the 2020 Election during the Covid-19 Pandemic period, considering the previous Regional Head Election held in normal times and voter participation in Pandenglang Regency falls into the low category, namely 56%. And can the efforts made by the KPU Pandeglang increase public voter participation in Pandeglang Regency?

B. Research Methods

The approach used in this writing is qualitative, with descriptive analysis techniques. With this approach the authors hope to understand the issues discussed in depth related to the observed phenomena. Descriptive analysis method is used because the data and information collected focuses on the actual phenomenon or problem through the process of data collection, preparation, processing, and drawing conclusions. The results are used to describe the objective empirical state of the phenomenon or problem being studied. While the data collection technique used is literature study. This was done because of the limitations of directly interviewing authoritative sources at the time of writing.

C. Results and Discussion

Theory of the Concept of Democracy

There are many systems in government administration, democracy is the best choice for realizing the aspirations of government to achieve prosperity. In a democracy, the voice of the people is considered the voice of God which must be realized. This means that government is carried out on the will of the majority of the people, not a handful of people or one person. Thus, all forms of activities carried out by the government are carried out with democratic principles. Such as the Implementation of General Elections and Regional Head Elections in order to elect leaders who will run the wheels of government both in the central and regional executive and legislative branches.

Many scientists define democracy as competition for popular votes. With democracy, all levels of society have the right to be elected and to choose. This implies that the democratic system of all citizens has the right to make decisions that can change their lives (Joseph Schumpeter, 2012). In another sense, democracy is defined by five criteria, which is: equal rights in determining binding collective decisions; effective participation, an equal opportunities for all citizens in the collective decision-making process; unveiling the truth, an opportunity mechanism provided by the state for citizens to provide a logical assessment of the course of the political and government process; mastery of the government's political agenda and coverage of all levels of society in relation to legal issues. (Robert Dahl, 2012).

The two definitions of democracy above are also supported by the theory written by Henry B. Mayo which states that "A democratic political system is where public policy is determined on the basis of a majority by representatives who are effectively supervised by the people in periodic elections held in an atmosphere guarantee of political freedom". Then he stated that democracy is based on several values, such as: 1) Settling disputes peacefully and institutionally (Institutionalized peaceful settlement of conflict); 2) Ensuring the implementation of peaceful change in a changing society (peaceful change in a changing society); 3) Organizing the understanding of leaders regularly (orderly succession of rules); 4) Limiting the use of violence to a minimum (minimum of coercion); 5) Recognizing and considers natural diversity in society which is reflected in the diversity of opinions, interests, and behavior and 6) Ensuring justice (Hendri B. Mayo, 2013).

Direct Regional Head Election which is often referred to as *Pemilukada* has become a new historical journey in the dynamics of national life in Indonesia (Syamsuadi and Yahya, 2018). The description above shows that the direct *Pemilukada* in the middle of Covid-19 is a new event in democracy in Indonesia. And an extraordinary event that can bring meaningful changes to the region. This is a means of people's sovereignty which is the essence of democracy. Therefore, the essence of democracy inherent in the *Pemilukada* should be addressed by the community to participate, giving political votes to the best leaders in their regions.

Pemilukada is seen as a space for developing democracy, which includes strengthening public society (political society), strengthening economic society (economic society) and strengthening cultural society (cultural society). Democratic development also includes strengthening and involving civil society (voice, access and control), a neutral and provisional bureaucracy (Amir Samsudin, 2020).

Pemilukada and Covid-19 in Indonesia

Elections for Regional Heads and Deputy Regional Heads in Indonesia were first held in June 2005. It is a general election to elect regional heads and deputy regional heads directly by local residents who meet the requirements to vote. The legal basis for *Pilkada* administrators is Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government.

Pilkada has been included in the category of General Elections in Indonesia, since the enactment of Law Number 22 of 2007 concerning Election Administrators, so that it is officially named the General Election of Regional Heads and Deputy Regional Heads or *Pemilukada*. Based on Law Number 12 of 2008, *Pemilukada* participants are pairs of candidates proposed by political parties or coalitions of political parties. Then the provisions were increased with the existence of Law Number 7 of 2017 which states that *Pemilukada* participants can come from individual candidate pairs supported by a number of people. This law follows up on the decision of the Constitutional Court which cancels several articles concerning *Pemilukada* participants in Law Number 12 of 2008.

The implementation of direct *Pilkada* arises from the implementation of *Pilkada* through Representatives (DPRD) as mandated by Law Number 22 of 1999. This amendment is based on the Law on direct *Pilkada* administrations that is Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government.

The fourth simultaneous regional head election will be held in 2020. The implementation of this regional head election is expected to be better than the implementation in 2015, 2017 and 2018. So that all parties, including local governments and KPU in 270 regions, work together to make it a success. However, the 2020 simultaneous regional elections are not easy because they will take place in 270 points, or nearly half of Indonesia's territory. The 2020 *Pilkada* is getting more complicated because of a global, non-natural disaster and Indonesia is also affected. The impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic has affected all aspects, including politics in all countries. One of the impacts is the delay in the implementation of the 2020 *Pemilukada*. Provisions for the Postponement of Simultaneous Regional Head Elections (*Pemilukada*) 2020 due to the non-natural disaster of the Covid-19 pandemic as a whole are regulated in Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) Number 2 of 2020 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents and Mayors. If it cannot be implemented, it will be rescheduled after the Covid-19 pandemic ends.

The implementation of the 2020 *Pilkada* created various problems, both for the government itself and the community. This is due to the Covid-19 outbreak, so extra

vigilance must be created by the government as the organizer and the community as voting participants in all regions. Covid-19 has the potential to weaken a person's immunity and health, even death. Disagreements with and against from the government, society and political observers cannot be avoided. Logical reasons emerge in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic situation, the essence is to hope for the creation of maximum quality of democracy even though the outbreak is occurring. In addition, the preparation and technical implementation of Pilkada is also a demand to anticipate the spread of Covid-19 due to the holding of the General Election. (Singgih Choirul Rizki, Yusuf Adam Hilman, 2020)

WHO (World Health Organization) has officially declared the corona virus (Covid-19) a pandemic on March 9, 2020. In this case, it can be interpreted that the corona virus has spread over a large geographical area in the world. The term pandemic may seem frightening, but it really has nothing to do with the severity of the disease or the number of victims infected with the virus, but rather to its widespread spread. In general, the corona virus gives mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, and the majority resolves within a few weeks. However, for some people who are vulnerable and at high risk (the elderly, people with chronic health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes), this virus can become a serious health problem. Most of the victims of Covid-19 do come from these vulnerable and at-risk groups.

The official website of the Covid-19 Task Force of the Republic of Indonesia explains that it is important for everyone to understand how to reduce risk, keep up with developments in information and know what to do if they experience symptoms. In this way, we can protect ourselves and others. Provisions related to the real sector policy direction for handling are regulated in several regulations, including Perppu No.1 of 2020 which was enacted on March 31, 2020 concerning State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability for Handling the Covid-19 Pandemic, including setting a budget deficit limit exceeding 3% from Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the handling of corona, issuance of debt securities or other securities to be purchased by State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) and investors. This includes other regulations aimed at preventing the spread of

the Covid-19 pandemic such as the Ministry of Religion Circular Number 6 of 2020 concerning Technical Guidelines for Worship in the months of Ramadan and Eid 1441 H. In this circular, there are 15 technical guideline points for worshipping during the pandemic, including the prohibition of praying in one room at the same time as many people, for example tarawih prayers in congregation, Nuzulul Qur'an commemoration, group tadarus, breaking fast and joint sahur abolished. The existence of this rule has certainly drawn criticism from among the people, the majority of whom do not agree to miss the moments that are usually carried out during the month of Ramadan to Eid. However, the government assured the public that these are the best options that can be taken to accelerate the resolution of the Covid-19 pandemic problem. (Ajeng Maharani and Efriza, 2020).

Although many activities were stopped through government policies because they were considered to have the potential to spread Covid-19, the General Election in Indonesia was still held with only a delay of time. The Indonesian Government's decision to continue implementing the Regional Head Election (Pilkada) process simultaneously in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic will continue to be implemented, with the following conditions: (a) Regarding the process of implementing campaigns in accordance with health protocols regulated through PKPU Number 13 of 2020 Article 57, Article 63 and Article 58 paragraphs (1) and (2), (b) Regarding campaign materials it is regulated through PKPU Number 10 of 2020 Article 60 paragraph (2) and (3) and PKPU Number 13 of 2020 Article 62, and (c) activities which is prohibited and the sanctions are regulated through PKPU Number 13 of 2020 article 88B, 88C paragraph (1) and paragraph (2). (Sri Husnulwati, 2021).

KPU Pandeglang Efforts to Increase Voter Participation

The low voter turnout in Pandeglang Regency in the 2015 Election, made the homework for the KPU Pandeglang even harder, considering that the 2020 Pilkada was held in abnormal conditions or in the midst of the outbreak of Covid-19 which endangered human lives. So that various efforts must be prepared, for the Pemilukada to take place with an increasing level of voter participation compared to the previous Pemilukada. Responding to real conditions like this, Head of KPU Pandeglang Ahmad Suja'i said that "Families have

an important role in boosting voter participation. We want the families in Pandeglang to actively help socialize the election of the regent and deputy regent at least in their family environment" (Ahmad Suja'ih in the Socialization of Family-Based Pemilukada at the Rancaseneng Village Office, Cikeusik District, Sunday 11 October 2020). This means that the first thing the Pandeglang KPU did was to invite the whole family to become agents who disseminate information about the implementation of the 2020 Pandeglang Regional Election. According to him, in the global social order, the family is the lowest starata and very much determines the social order above it.

The high voter turnout in Pandeglang Regency is a good indicator of the democratic climate this nation is running. So that high participation in the election will greatly determine the quality of the election. The Pandeglang KPU, as the organizer, does not only carry out the stages of the Regional Election agenda, but also seeks to improve the quality of democracy in Pandeglang. One of the keys to the success of democracy in Pandeglang Regency is the emergence of citizen awareness to convey their voice directly, openly, freely, secretly, honestly and fairly. (Endang Mulyana, 11 Oktober 2020, 21:28 WIB)

The second effort made by the KPU Pandeglang to increase voter participation is to invite the media in Pandeglang to work together to increase voter participation in 2020. Head of KPU Pandeglang, Ahmad Sujai said, "The function of the media is considered important in conveying various information regarding elections and voting. Considering that the media is seen as the fourth pillar of democracy after the executive, legislative and judiciary". (Ahmad Suja'ih, Thursday 5 December 2020, In a Press Release with Media throughout Pandeglang Regency). The development of technology in the dissemination of information that has been carried out by the media is the reason for the important role of the media which is very strategic. And the level of utilization of the Pandeglang community towards social media is an important consideration for the KPU Pandeglang in collaboration with the media in an effort to increase voter participation in Pandeglang Regency. This means that the KPU Pandeglang hopes that the media can become partners and help the KPU in socializing the importance of holding the 2020 Regional Head General

Election to increase voter participation. Moreover, the Pemilukada this time was held during the Covid-19 Pandemic, which limits it as a form of association because it is considered to increase the potential for the spread of Covid-19.

Responding to the above problems, the active role of the media in escorting citizens to polling stations is very important, because the means of disseminating election information is the media, without demanding that the public gather in one place. KPU Pandeglang hopes that the media can carry out its basic function as providing information. With the establishment of a good working relationship between the KPU Pandeglang and the media in Pandeglang Regency, the public will be more active in following a series of implementation stages and the election of the 2020 regent and deputy regent (Samsul, 5 December 2020). To maximize cooperation with the media, the KPU of Pandeglang Regency collaborates with the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI/Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia) of Pandeglang Regency. The collaboration began at the Socialization of the Counting and Voting for the 2020 Regent and Deputy Regent of Pandeglang Election. In addition, candidates for regents and deputy regents will conduct an open debate which will be broadcast on two private TV stations, namely Metro TV and Kompas TV. This activity is also an effort to increase community participation in the 2020 Pemilukada in Pandeglang Regency, in order to get leaders according to the wishes of the community.

The third effort taken by the KPU of Pandeglang Regency to increase voter participation is cooperation with religious leaders throughout the Pandeglang Regency as conveyed by Iman Fathurahman to the Religious Base, in the Cipeucang District Office Hall.

"All parties can increase voter participation, one of which is through a religious basis. Besides being very close to the community, religious leaders are also much respected. Therefore, religious leaders will easily invite the public to exercise their voting rights on 9 December. Pilkada 2020 in Pandeglang (Iman Fathurahman, Thursday 19 November 2020)

The statement above illustrates that the existence of religious figures in the life of the Pandeglang community has a very significant influence, therefore the public must hear their

appeal and make it easier to invite people to vote in the 2020 elections in Pandeglang Regency. With the involvement of religious leaders in Pandeglang Regency, Pemilukada organizers in Pandeglang Regency hopes that all citizens who have voting rights can accommodate their voting rights.

The fourth attempt was made by the KPU Pandeglang, long before the Pemilukada was held, and the KPU of Pandeglang Regency conducted outreach to novice voters, including socialization at SMK Negeri 2 Pandeglang. This is done to raise awareness in participating in the General Election in a democratic manner, and to increase voter participation. This socialization was carried out in collaboration with the National and Political Unity Agency (Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik / Kesbangpol) and the Pandeglang Election Supervisory Agency (Badan Pengawas Pemilu / Bawaslu). Also by cooperating with community organizations, youth organizations and high schools and the equivalent, (Socialization for the General Election of KPU Pandeglang, Monday, 27 January 2020).

In the socialization to first-time voters, Head of KPU Pandeglang Regency, Ahmad Sujai said: "The potential for new voters can contribute their votes in the 2020 Election. New voters can become pioneers of change, become pioneers of quality voters and smart voters". (Ahmad Suja'ih, Monday 27 January 2020, in the Socialization to Voters at SMK Negeri 2 Pandeglang Regency). This socialization was attended by hundreds of students. The socialization material presented included election procedures and methods of granting valid voting rights in the determination of the leader of Pandeglang Regency for five years. Meanwhile, the number of first-time voters in the previous regional elections in 2015 was 40,000 voters, out of a total of 10 percent of first-time voters. It is hoped that new voters will become the pioneers of change and become qualified and smart voters in Pandeglang Regency.

If you look at the figures in the previous Pemilukada, the number of first-time voters is very large. However, the Sub-Division for National Insights and Conflict Handling of the Pandeglang Kesbangpol, Dede Mulyadi said:

"If you look at the data of first-time voters as much as 30 percent of the total Permanent Voters List (Daftar Pemilih Tetap / DPT), it turns out that the level of first-time voters is

very low, especially in the 2015 Pilkada. Only about 15 percent and total public participation in the 2015 Pilkada is still low, namely 56.72 percent". (KPU Pandeglang Regional Head Election Socialization, Monday, January 27, 2020).

Based on the description of the statement above, it can be concluded that the participation of first-time voters in Pandeglang is still low, not in accordance with the large numbers. Therefore, the socialization of the 2020 Pemilukada is very important. And not only first-time voters, KPU Pandeglang will also conduct socialization to the public which will be held from February to May in 35 sub-districts throughout Pandeglang Regency.

Beginner voters are expected to be able to provide information and track records to invite their colleagues to participate in the 2020 Regional Election of Pandeglang Regency. The socialization of the Pemilukada KPU Pandeglang Regency illustrates the hope for new voters to get to know political education and in its implementation new voters can become smart voters who know the vision and mission they will vote for, it is hoped that in 2020 the voter list will increase to 80 percent, (Tuntas Media January 27 2020)

The fifth effort made by the Pandeglang KPU to increase voter participation is to intensify the socialization of the 2020 Pandeglang Regent and Deputy Regent Elections. All segments of society were visited by the KPU, including areas with low voter participation bases during the 2015 Election for the Regent and Deputy Regent of Pandeglang. Nunung Nurazizah said: "In our records, not all districts and villages have good voter participation. Areas with low participation need special handling and massive socialization". (KPU of Pandeglang Regency in the Socialization of the 2020 Pemilukada in Cikoneng Village). Furthermore, Bawaslu Pandeglang, Lina Herlina, asked the residents "To help the organizers succeed in the General Election, especially in terms of supervision. (KPU of Pandeglang Regency in the Socialization of the 2020 Pemilukada in Cikoneng Village).

The two statements above, either from the KPU or Bawaslu of Pandeglang Regency, show the high efforts of Pemilukada organizers to increase voter participation. And this effort was well responded to by the community, as conveyed by Suwardi who was one of the participants of the socialization, he said: "Glad to get information from the KPU about

the implementation of the Pandeglang Regional Election, now I know the voting day will be held on Wednesday, December 9 2020. God willing, I will come to the polling station to vote. My right to vote is very decisive even in the village, "(Suardi, in the Socialization of Pemilukada by KPU and Bawaslu Pandeglang, October 9, 2020).

And the sixth effort so that the implementation of the 2020 Pandeglang Pilkada remains conducive, the Pandeglang KPU implements strict Health protocols in voting at every polling station in Pandeglang Regency. This was done in order to protect the public from Covid-19. Considering that the election of regents this time is different from the previous elections. When voters come to the polling station, they are obliged to wear a mask, have their body temperature checked, wash their hands and wear disposable gloves. For that, the KPU hopes that people will not be afraid to come to the polling station. (Samsuri and Head of PWI Pandeglang Regency, Iman Fathurahman. Thursday, 19 November 2020).

Election of the Regent and Deputy Regent of Pandeglang Regency Wednesday, December 9, 2020

The election of the regent and deputy regent is the exercise of people's sovereignty in the district / city area to elect the regent and deputy regent democratically on the basis of a direct, general, free, confidential, honest and fair attitude. And the election of regents and deputy regents in Indonesia including Pandeglang Regency in 2020 was carried out in this non-natural disaster (Covid 19) condition, held based on PKPU 13 of 2020, the third change to PKPU 6 in 2020. The Simultaneous Election was carried out with the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) prevention and control health protocol by taking into account the health and safety of election organizers, election participants, voters, and all parties involved in organizing the election.

Although the election of the regent and deputy regent was held during the Covid-19 pandemic, campaign activities were still being carried out, but with different methods. This campaign is important because how can the public know the vision and mission of their prospective leader without a campaign, namely the activity of offering a vision, mission, candidate pair programs and / or other information, which aims to introduce or convince voters. Campaigns are conducted by Political Parties or Combined Political Parties,

Candidate Pairs and / or Campaign Teams, and can be facilitated by Provincial KPU / KIP for the Election of Governors and Deputy Governors and Regency / Municipal KPU / KIP for the Election of Regent and Deputy Regent or Mayor and Deputy Mayor. (Article 5 paragraph 1 PKPU No. 4 of 2017). The campaign method carried out in Pandeglang Regency in the election of the regent and deputy regent in 2020 was carried out by 1) campaign through social media and 2) campaign through online media (Article 88C PKPU 13/2020).

When viewed from the data related to the activities of Indonesian people in cyberspace, it shows that there is a large enough opportunity for each candidate pair or successful team to carry out campaign activities digitally to attract the attention, interest and sympathy of voters to vote for them during the voting process which will be held on December 9, 2020. Based on the research results of Hoot Suite (Social Media Management Platform) and We Are Social (social marketing agency) released in January 2020 with the theme "Global Digital Reports 2020", states:

"Nearly 64 percent or around 175.4 million people from the total population of Indonesia of around 272.1 million, are connected to the internet network. The majority of internet users in Indonesia are voting rights users in the 2020 elections, namely people with an average age of 16 to 64 years, their average time surfing in cyberspace is also quite long, which is around 7 hours 59 minutes per day". (Hafrizal Okta Ade Putra, 2020).

The above statement shows that the use of social media in Indonesia has reached 59 percent of Indonesia's total population. The average Indonesian uses social media for about 3 hours 26 minutes per day. This figure is also above the global average of only 2 hours 24 minutes per day. This means that the campaign through social media and online models carried out by candidates for regents and vice regents in Pandeglang Regency can be conveyed and is likely to encourage people who have voting rights to participate in coming to the available polling stations to cast their political votes for the candidates.

In holding the election for the regent and deputy regent in Pandeglang Regency, the introduction of candidates to the community is very important because it relates to the fate

of the community where a leader takes them. The recognition is also one of the factors of public awareness to cast their votes at polling stations (TPS). The campaign is a means whether the community wants to elect a potential leader. One of the benchmarks for the success of the candidate for district head and vice regent in Pandeglang is marked by the level of community attendance in political campaigns. With the existence of a political campaign, it is hoped that it can increase the understanding and political awareness of the community about the importance of knowing and selecting the expected leader candidates. Through campaigns with social and online media, it is hoped that it can provide understanding to first-time voters and general voters about the prospective leaders to be elected in the 2020 General Election in Pandeglang Regency. There is no doubt that the media today are very helpful for disseminating information.

The Pandeglang regional election was attended by two candidates for regent and deputy regent. The pair number 01 is Irna Narulita and Tanto Arban who are the incumbents. While the candidate for candidate 02 is the pair Thoni Fatoni Mukson-Miftahul Tamami. Based on data from KPU Pandeglang, the number of voters in the Pandeglang election was 904,782 people registered in 2,243 polling stations. (Acep Nazmudin, Kompas.com - Tuesday, 8 December 2020)

The election of the regent and deputy regent was held according to strict procedures, as stated by Ahmadi:

"Voters must follow health protocols by wearing masks and bringing their own stationery. Meanwhile, TPS also adheres to strict protocols. The organizers have prepared two polling stations, namely outdoor and indoors. Voters with a body temperature above 37 degrees Celsius are directed to vote at an outdoor polling station outside the polling station. The committee also provides disposable plastic gloves that voters must wear when voting. Meanwhile, the ink marks after voting were no longer colored, but instead dripped onto the fingers".

It is not only Covid-19 that is a challenge for the Pandeglang KPU in carrying out *Pemilukada* and increasing voter participation. Flood disaster is also an external factor that can hinder the presence of voters at the polling stations prepared by the KPU. Prior to the

voting, a number of areas in Pandeglang were still flooded. General Election Commission (KPU) Commissioner Pandeglang Ahmadi said, "There are three sub-districts that are still flooded, namely Sukaresmi, Panimbang and Patia". (Acep Nazmudin, Kompas.com - Tuesday, 8 December 2020). This condition was addressed very wisely, the KPU Pandeglang, held a pick-up to people whose areas were flooded to give their voting rights to candidates for regents and deputy regents. This, is an eccentric step and rarely occurs in the implementation of Pemilukada in Indonesia.

Voter Participation in the Pemilukada of Pandeglang Regency

Regional Head Election, Pandeglang Pemilukada in 2020 was held on 9 December. Even though it was held in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic conditions and natural floods, the KPU Pandeglang stated that "The level of participation in the Pilkada this time has increased compared to the 2015 " (Rangga Eka Putra / Satrio Giri Marwanto / Perwiranta, Saturday, 19 December 2020). The above statement is in accordance with PKPU Number 5 of 2020 concerning the stages, programs and schedule of holding the election for governors and deputy governors, regents and deputy regents, and / or mayors and deputy mayors; The Pandeglang KPU held a Plenary Meeting of the recapitulation of vote count results at the district level on Tuesday, December 15, 2020. This activity is the culmination of the voting and vote counting stages which were held on December 9, 2020 at 2,243 polling stations in 339 villages and 35 sub-districts throughout Pandeglang Regency.

In the event, each representative from the Regional Election Committee (Panitia Pemilihan Daerah / PPK) read out the vote numbers that were agreed upon in advance in an open plenary session at the district level. Although some corrections took place, overall the activity went on safely and smoothly. At the plenary conclusion, the KPU Pandeglang determined that the election of the Regent and Deputy Regent of Pandeglang was attended by 633,003 people from the total voters registered in the DPT plus DPph (moved to vote) and DPTb (additional voters). Meanwhile, the number of voters determined by the KPU in

the Final Voters List on October 15, 2020 was 904,782 voters. This means that voter participation in this election has reached 69.47 percent. (Nunung Nurazizah, 04 January 2021).

When viewed based on the numbers, of course this figure does not match the target set by the KPU Pandeglang, which is 75 percent, but from this point of view this value is quite satisfying. In fact, in several regions, the percentage figures were found that far exceeded the target, although they did not reach half of the total polling stations in Pandeglang Regency. And when compared with the achievement of community participation in the 2015 regent and deputy regent elections which only reached 56 percent, the achievement of community participation this time has increased by more than 12 percent.

This achievement certainly cannot be separated from the moral burden of the Pandeglang KPU with the low voter turnout in the 2015 Election. So, the efforts made by the KPU in socializing the importance of the 2020 Pilkada in Pandeglang Regency are maximized by cooperating with strategic nodes that have an important function to provide awareness to the Pemilukada. Among them are family, religious leaders, the Media and Journalists' Association throughout Pandeglang Regency, and accurate socialization to first time voters who have a large number, and Pandeglang areas where the level of voter participation in the previous General Election was low. This effort implies that Covid-19 and the flood disaster are not an obstacle to realizing lofty ideals, carrying out state duties, creating an ideal democratic state life.

D. Conclusion

Based on the description of the above discussion, it can be concluded that voter participation in the 2020 Pemilukada in Pandeglang Regency even though its achievements do not match the figure targeted by the Pandeglang KPU of 75 percent and only 69.47 percent, voter participation is considered to have increased. The reason is, the Pemilukada was held at an unusual time, namely in the middle of Covid-19 and floods in several areas where Pandeglang residents voted. This value is also greater than the previous election participation in 2015 which only reached 56 percent.

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