

Analysis of Government Communication in Fulfillment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Indonesian Government during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ni Putu Eka Budi Pradnya Wulandari Dewi¹, Novia Sri Falinda²

¹ Bachelor of Applied Information and Public Relations Program, Vocational School, Diponegoro University

² Bachelor of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Selamat Sri Batang University

***Korespondensi, e-mail: niputuekabudipwdewi@lecturer.undip.ac.id**

Abstract

Covid-19 is a disease outbreak that is contagious, and should be addressed together both from the government and the community. People with disabilities are one of the vulnerable groups which most affected by Covid-19. The problem that will be examined in this article is how is the Indonesian Government's strategic communication efforts to fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic. This article uses a qualitative research approach method. This research seeks to explain the way how Indonesian Government's communicate in order to fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities during pandemic. The results show that the Government of Indonesia has done a communication effort in guaranteeing the protection rights of persons with disabilities. The implementation of the policies that have been designed by the Government of Indonesia has not been carried out optimally

Keyword: Government, Communication, Covid-19, Disabilities People

Abstrak

Covid-19 merupakan wabah penyakit yang mudah menular, dan diperlukan penanggulangan secara bersama-sama baik dari pemerintah maupun masyarakat. Penyandang disabilitas merupakan salah satu kelompok rentan yang paling terdampak oleh Covid-19. Permasalahan yang akan dikaji dalam artikel ini yaitu bagaimana upaya komunikasi strategis Pemerintah Indonesia dalam pemenuhan hak penyandang disabilitas di masa pandemi Covid-19. Artikel ini menggunakan metode pendekatan penelitian kualitatif. Penelitian ini berusaha untuk menjelaskan bagaimana Pemerintah Indonesia melakukan komunikasi dalam rangka memenuhi hak penyandang disabilitas di masa pandemi. Tetapi, implementasi dari kebijakan yang telah dirancang oleh Pemerintah Indonesia belum terlaksana secara optimal.

Kata Kunci: Pemerintah, Komunikasi, Covid-19, Orang Disabilitas

INTRODUCTION

In every human being, they have rights which are normative elements within the scope of the right to equality and the right to freedom between individuals or institutions in their interactions. Basic rights have been owned by humans since they were born. These basic rights are called human rights. Human rights have the essence as a way to protect human safety from the action of balance between both individual interests and public interests. Human rights are universal which means that this right applies anywhere and anyone and this right cannot be taken away (Triwahyuningsih, 2018).

Then, the fulfillment of basic needs must be carried out by every human being as an effort to maintain life. Matters relating to human needs have a strong influence. The fulfillment of needs for people with disabilities must be met without exception. According to The Disability Services Act in 1993, the definition of a person with a disability, namely the inability of a person caused by intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, physical impairment, as well as a combination of any of these impairments, and has the possibility to be permanent, and the person has limited capacity in social interaction, communication, learning, mobility, decision-making or self-care, and must require ongoing social services. In Law number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, what is meant by fulfillment is an effort made to fulfill, implement and realize the rights of persons with disabilities (Radissa et al., 2020).

The United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution A/61/106 on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on December 13, 2006. The rights of persons with disabilities are contained in the resolution, and steps were taken to ensure the implementation of the convention. The Government of Indonesia has participated by signing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on March 30, 2007 in New York. The seriousness of the Indonesian state is shown in the signing of the convention which aims to respect, protect, fulfill, and promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Indonesia ratified the convention by passing Law No. 19 of 2011 on the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on November 10, 2011.

After the ratification of the CRPD in Indonesia, the terminology of persons with disabilities in Indonesia prevailed before finally, changing to the terminology of persons with disabilities. This change in terminology was carried out through a series of seminars and meetings of policy makers, especially persons with disabilities in Indonesia. This change is based on several reasons, namely from the language aspect, the word disability contains negative connotations, such as a sense of demeaning or negative (Sholihah, 2016).

As we know, the presence of the Corona virus has been officially reported by China to the World Health Organization on December 31, 2019. According to Harvard University researchers, satellite photos show an increase in traffic in a number of hospitals located in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China which indicates the Corona virus is in the city earlier than what has been reported by China (BBC News Indonesia, 2020).

The impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is not only felt by employers and employees but also people with disabilities. The group that is hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic is the group with special needs. The Chairperson of the East Java Social Welfare Activities Coordinating Board

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(BK3S), Pinky Saptandari in a video conference on BPNB Youtube on May 17, 2020 said that friends with disabilities are the most affected group, and the hardest compared to others. Executive Director of Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, Dini Widiastuti further added that many people with disabilities in Eastern Indonesia lost their jobs due to the Corona outbreak. As of May 2020, data collection of assistance from the Government for people with disabilities has just begun, and the Government is not prioritizing assistance for people with disabilities to be recorded first (luthfia, 2020).

Quoted from the news alert of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities from a communication perspective, the Dinner was held as a series of activities by the 2019 International Day of Disability (HDI) as a place to strengthen communication ties between the Government, Companies, Media and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in helping to realize inclusion programs and activities including matters of hot news in the media. The Government of Indonesia has an agenda for the implementation of the 2016-2020 SDG's which is directed towards the realization of an inclusive society with the slogan "No One Left Behind". The Indonesian government together with other layers work together for the future progress of the Indonesian state where people with disabilities are actively involved in all aspects of life (OHH Ditjen Rehsos, 2019).

Seeing the reality of what has been done by the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is a form of real action aimed at people with disabilities. The current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic does not necessarily mean that the Indonesian government is quick to respond in paying attention to people with disabilities as things that must be prioritized. What is reviewed further in this article is more about the Indonesian Government's communication in fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The formulation of the problem as a reference in writing this article is how is the Indonesian Government's strategic communication in fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reporting from the UN Country Team, and Implementing Partners' guidance note entitled "Including the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in United Nations Programming at Country Level", the guidance asserts that all core international human rights treaties protect the human rights of a person with a disability. However, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) clearly defines, and details how human rights apply to persons with disabilities, and sets out the obligations of states to promote the joys that apply to all human rights. The Convention is complemented by an Optional Protocol that sets out procedures that strengthen the implementation, and monitoring of the Convention, namely individual communications, and inquiry procedures. The standards, and principles of the CRPD should guide all aspects of UN programming. The Convention represents a shift in the approach to persons with disabilities at the international policy level. Rather than considering persons with disabilities as objects of charity, medical care as well as social protection, it

recognizes them as “holders” of rights, capable of claiming rights, and living lives in dignity and autonomy as active members of society.

The CRPD is informed by an understanding of equality referred to as “substantive equality” or “equality of outcome”. To promote the equality of persons with disabilities in all areas, and eliminate discrimination. The CRPD recognizes disability as an evolving concept resulting from the interaction between persons with disabilities, and the attitudinal and environmental barriers that impede their full, effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. The CRPD recognizes disability as an evolving concept, resulting from the interaction between persons with disabilities, and attitudes and environmental barriers that impede their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Sutrisno, 2020).

Quoted from hrw.org's “Insisting on Inclusion - Institutionalization and Barriers to Education for Children with Disabilities in Kyrgyzstan”, the Government of Kyrgyzstan recognized the importance of ending segregation and discrimination against people with disabilities, and took basic steps to improve the protection of the rights of people with disabilities in recent years. In March 2019, former president Sooronboy Jeenbekov signed a law making Kyrgyzstan a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This follows a government effort that began in 2012, to close or transform 17 of 140 institutions for children, including children with disabilities. Among the many pressures on families to place children with disabilities in institutions, discriminatory barriers to education in the communities where they live are the main ones. Children with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan often have no choice but to attend specialized schools or receive education at home, violating their right to inclusive education. Children expelled from state residential institutions or schools still struggle to access inclusive education in schools in their communities (*Insisting on Inclusion Institutionalization and Barriers to Education for Children with Disabilities in Kyrgyzstan*, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis approach that will systematically write down the various findings obtained in this research. Researchers based on the type of research conducted, namely literature research. Literature research is research conducted only based on written works, including research results that have not been published or have been published. Research using literature studies does not have to go to the field, and then meet with respondents. In library research, this is not the first step in preparing a research framework but also, can utilize library sources in obtaining research data (Ndaumanu, 2020).

Data obtained from desk research is secondary data, namely collecting literature related to the research topic from journal articles, government documents, and online news articles. Data that has been collected from library research is then grouped, selected and analyzed. The data analyzed by the author based on communication theory combined with law is data that has been analyzed by the author. The results of the analysis are then presented descriptively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

People with Disabilities during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Jane Buchanan who is the Deputy Director of Disability Rights at Human Rights Watch in hrw.org gave a statement that groups of people with disabilities are very cornered, and stigmatized even in normal conditions. She added that if the government is not responsive to this condition, especially regarding the inclusion of people with disabilities in responding to the Covid-19 outbreak, people with disabilities remain in a position of serious danger, and then become infected and die from the virus that continues to mutate, and spread rapidly.

Reporting from abc.com news, people with disabilities in Indonesia are increasingly difficult during the pandemic. This is shown by evidence that there are people with disabilities who are studying abroad, and finally have to return to Indonesia due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Indirectly, people with disabilities need other people to help them but, during this pandemic, interacting with other people is a risky thing, and it is very possible to contract the virus. In addition, it is increasingly difficult for people with disabilities to get a job, especially during this pandemic. A survey was conducted by the Covid-19 Response Network of Disabled People's Organizations where 205 disabled respondents in NTT only 22 percent of them had a regular income. 50 percent of people with disabilities in NTT do not even have an income (Salim,dalam Jahidin, 2016).

Government Communication on Fulfilling the Rights of Persons with Disabilities during the Pandemic

In terms of government communication, another survey was conducted by the Network of Disabled People's Organizations Covid-19 Response, the survey results also showed that only 30 percent of 1,683 people with disabilities understood the virus and its prevention protocols. This shows that the communication carried out by the Government of Indonesia to disability groups has not run optimally. The government has not paid special attention to disability groups (Salim, dalam Jahidin, 2016).

Reporting from kompas.com news, Associate Expert Staff for Law and Human Rights at the Presidential Staff Office named Sunarman Sukamto informed the government's performance in its duty to meet the needs of people with disabilities during the Corona virus pandemic. In terms of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Covid-19 prevention guidelines have been issued and the Ministry of Social Affairs has taken care of social assistance funds (bansos). Then, special protection guidelines have been issued by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection.

The Task Force for the Acceleration of Covid-19 Handling has used sign language spokespersons in every provision of information related to Covid-19. The Ministry of National Development Planning of the Republic of Indonesia/National Development Planning Agency has organized a webinar on the impact of Covid-19 on persons with disabilities involving the central government, local governments, organizations of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders. The Ministry of PDT has developed guidelines on inclusion design development. Finally, the Ministry of Education and Culture has

socialized the 2020 Government Regulation on Appropriate Accommodation for Learners with Disabilities (Mashabi, 2020).

The Ministry of Communication and Information, and the Committee for Handling Covid-19 and National Economic Recovery (KPCPEN) have organized virtual activities in the Dissemination of Public Information and Communication “Persons with Disabilities Struggle to Face the Pandemic” by inviting speakers from the Ministry of Social Affairs, namely the Director of Social Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Eva Rahmi Kasim. This activity was held as a basis for disseminating positive narratives as an effort from the government to provide information and educate the public so that understanding of people with disabilities can be owned during the adaptation of new habits. Learning obstacles for children with disabilities are important points that must be considered (Humas Direktorat Penyandang Disabilitas, 2020).

On the other side of the equation, there were complaints from people with disabilities that they did not receive adequate social assistance and health services. People with disabilities felt that the government's attention before and after the pandemic outbreak was the same, and no significant changes were seen. One of the persons with disabilities had come to the agency or social service to complain but, there was no response, and no further action. Then, there is a lack of information about outbreak mitigation and health protocols in the district. In the end, people with disabilities fend for themselves (Firhansyah, 2020).

From the explanation above, the Government of Indonesia through the relevant Ministries has issued guidelines related to the fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic. But from the perspective of people with disabilities, the socialization of health protocols and explanations of the Covid-19 virus are not thoroughly socialized. Of course, this is an important agenda for the government so that the fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities can be maximally fulfilled.

Government Communication

In a pandemic situation to social mobility restrictions like this, what do people need? One of them is public communication. Public communication is known as a communication activity and strategy aimed at certain listeners or target audiences. The audience or target audience in this article are people with disabilities. Thus, the government communication services needed must refer to and be adjusted to the level of knowledge, capacity, type and characteristics of people with disabilities. This government communication is also a means of implementing PP Number 21 of 2020 to simultaneously limit the spread of Covid-19 which is very fast and widespread so that it has an impact on political, economic, social, cultural, defense and security aspects, and community welfare, especially in Indonesia. Of course, while still paying attention to the needs of education, work productivity, and worship of the population, as well as paying attention to the basic needs of the community so that they can be met such as health services, food needs, and other daily living needs.

In government communication, public communication is a key element in building transparency, participation and public trust. Therefore, the government

is required to provide access to accurate, transparent and easily accessible information as a responsibility in public communication (including access to health information in handling the Covid-19 outbreak). As an effort by the government as a form of state protection for people with disabilities. Because based on Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, they have the right to life, justice and legal protection, health, social welfare, and the right to protection from disasters (Article 20). Where, public communication is very much needed by people with disabilities so that they can access information equally and inclusively. Because they are one of the groups that are indeed vulnerable to contracting Covid-19.

For example, children with cerebral palsy are susceptible to congenital diseases in the form of lung disorders. In case This public communication has become very necessary, because of several policies in handling and preventing the corona virus, it may not necessarily be applicable to some people with disabilities. In fact, the strategy of social restrictions or social distancing is difficult to implement for some people with disabilities. Meanwhile, some of them need assistance in their daily activities, so this condition requires them to continue to interact directly with other people.

Public communication provides great benefits for people with disabilities, because it is able to voice their needs and aspirations more widely, reduce negative stigma, and encourage the formation of a more inclusive and equitable society through increased awareness, empathy, and support from various parties. The benefits of public communication for people with disabilities are as follows (Farid, Ahmad Salman , Muhammad Ardiansyah, Rita Defriza, 2022):

First, people with disabilities need to be given space to convey information about the real conditions they face. For example, the PPKM policy and the appeal to "stay at home" create a dilemma for them, between following the advice or losing income, especially for those working in the informal sector such as traders, massage therapists, and other similar professions. This situation causes a drastic decrease in income, because customers are reluctant to shop or use their services. As a result, the risk of poverty increases and basic needs become increasingly difficult to meet.

Second, public communication has an important role in changing mindsets and increasing public awareness of the principle of inclusion. The negative stigma that has been attached to people with disabilities can be corrected through the dissemination of information on various digital platforms and social media. The messages conveyed must emphasize the importance of supporting and fulfilling the needs of people with disabilities, not only aimed at certain communities, but also to society at large. In this way, a positive perception and stronger support for the role of people with disabilities will be formed, based on the principles of equality and equal rights in community life.

Third, public communication provides opportunities for people with disabilities to be actively involved in community life. This participation can be realized through the establishment of a public relations institution that is directly managed by people with disabilities as its operators. With the ability to utilize various digital platforms, they are able to convey information and objectives—both general and specific—to the wider community independently and in a focused manner.

Fourth, public communication is a bridge to coordinate, collaborate, and synergize various related parties, so that a mutually supportive work system is created between elements of society. This synergy is important in building awareness and a shared willingness to participate in preventing the spread of Covid-19, including in the implementation of PPKM.

Fifth, public communication also has great benefits in providing mental health and psychosocial support for people with disabilities who are separated from their families or caregivers. During quarantine or treatment, public communication acts as a companion that helps reduce loneliness and provides medical and psychological guidance. That way, they can go through the recovery period more calmly and think positively.

Sixth, through public communication, people with disabilities can show that they are able to contribute to dealing with the pandemic, and can make their own decisions according to their respective conditions. They have different self-isolation techniques than non-disabled individuals. Some require companions or social interaction, while others, such as the visually impaired, need to keep touching objects around them to recognize their environment. Therefore, each approach must be tailored to the needs of each individual.

Seventh, the use of information technology is very effective in eliminating social barriers and increasing accessibility of information for people with disabilities. They can independently access telemedicine services from various platforms such as Halodoc, AloDokter, SehatQ, and others, which provide free services for self-isolating patients with mild symptoms. Through this service, they can get consultations, medication consumption guidance, and suggestions for activities during the recovery period at home.

Eighth, public communication provides access to information regarding the rights of people with disabilities during the pandemic, such as accessibility needs, psychosocial and mental health support, protection from Covid-19 transmission, and the right to communicate with social authorities. In addition, they also have the right to convey messages, receive information directly from related institutions, and receive services that are appropriate to the conditions and impacts of the pandemic they are experiencing.

Information dissemination and public communication must be carried out regularly by the Ministry of Communication and Information and the Committee for Handling Covid-19 as well National Economic Recovery (KPC-PEN). Both are forms of educational and advocacy activities in the form of disseminating positive narratives as a means for the government to provide education and information to the public so that they understand various things related to disabilities during the new normal adaptation period.

CONCLUSION

The current pandemic is a condition where the Government of Indonesia is thinking about various sectors, and layers of society, including people with disabilities. Several related Ministries have also issued guidelines so that the rights of persons with disabilities during the pandemic can be fulfilled. As we know, in ordinary conditions where there is no pandemic, there is a lot of discrimination, and inequality of rights that occurs for people with disabilities. Although guidelines have been issued by several related Ministries, the

communication from the Government to persons with disabilities has not been fully reached. Difficulty after difficulty occurs to people with disabilities. From this paper, it can be concluded that the Government must improve the communication aspect so that the guidelines that have been prepared can be implemented properly to persons with disabilities.

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