

# Inclusive development in rural Indonesia: Actualizing disability rights in *Lheu Eu Village*

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## Article History

Received on 30 July 2024

1<sup>st</sup> Revision on 20 August 2024

2<sup>nd</sup> Revision on 21 August 2024

3<sup>rd</sup> Revision on 27 August 2024

4<sup>th</sup> Revision on 1 November 2024

Accepted on 11 November 2024

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study addresses the marginalization of persons with disabilities in rural Indonesian villages, specifically examining the implementation of Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities. This research seeks to enhance the status of persons with disabilities, ensuring equal rights and opportunities for their active participation in village development.

**Research methodology:** This study employs a normative juridical methodology, analyzing data from legal documents and literature, complemented by an empirical approach through interviews with key stakeholders. This mixed-methods approach helps clarify the legal rights of persons with disabilities and gather insights into the perspectives of village governments on inclusion.

**Results:** This study highlights the need for a community-centered development model that integrates the interests of persons with disabilities. This underscores the importance of adhering to human rights principles in ensuring the well-being of persons with disabilities in *Lheu Eu Village*, Darul Imarah District, and Aceh Besar. The study also emphasizes the necessity of collaborative efforts among village governments, businesses, academics, and disability advocates to implement legal mandates and regulatory frameworks for disability inclusion effectively.

**Limitations:** The findings of this study are primarily based on qualitative data, which may not capture the full extent of the issues faced by people with disabilities in different rural contexts. Additionally, the research was limited to a specific geographic area, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other regions.

**Contribution:** This study contributes to the body of knowledge on rural development and disability rights in Indonesia by providing a comprehensive analysis of the legal and social frameworks necessary for the inclusion of people with disabilities in village development. It offers practical recommendations to policymakers, village authorities, and other stakeholders to enhance the implementation of inclusive policies and practices.

**Keywords:** *Inclusive Development; Rural Indonesia; Disability Rights*

**How to Cite:** Anzar, M., Ikhwan, M., & Syukriyah, S. (2024). Inclusive development in rural Indonesia: Actualizing disability rights in *Lheu Eu Village*. *Journal of Social, Humanity, and Education*, 5(1), 23-35.

## 1. Introduction

As a sovereign state, the Republic of Indonesia upholds the realization of human rights as a fundamental principle, as articulated in the 1945 Constitution (Hosen, 2022; Iskandar, 2015). The Indonesian government has further demonstrated its commitment to international legal frameworks aimed at protecting and recognizing the rights of individuals with disabilities (Nursyamsi et al., 2015). Initially, this commitment was embodied in Law Number 4 of 1997 concerning Persons with Disabilities (Quinn,

2019; Widijantoro Hardjanti, 2021). However, recognizing the evolving needs and rights of persons with disabilities, the government enacted Law Number 8 of 2016, which supersedes previous legislation. This updated law provides a more comprehensive framework for ensuring the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of public life (Maftuhin 2016). The transition from the older legal framework to current law reflects Indonesia's ongoing efforts to align its national policies with international standards and best practices in disability rights.

Under Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, the legal framework in Indonesia categorizes disabilities into five distinct types: physical, intellectual, mental, sensory, and multiple disabilities (Wirya et al., 2023; Wirya et al., 2020; Widinarsih, 2019). This classification system is crucial to address the diverse needs of the disabled population. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2020, there were approximately 22.5 million individuals with disabilities in Indonesia, representing nearly five percent of the country's total population (Source: Kemensos). This significant prevalence of disabilities poses complex challenges for national social and health policies, necessitating targeted interventions and inclusive planning. In 2021, the Ministry of Social Affairs reported that out of the 22.97 million individuals with disabilities nationwide, 6.1 million are classified as having severe disabilities. This group includes 1.2 million individuals with physical disabilities, 3.07 million with sensory impairments, 149 thousand with mental disabilities, and 1.7 million with intellectual disabilities (RI 2021). Such a distribution highlights the diverse nature of disabilities in Indonesia and underscores the need for specialized services and support systems.

In the province of Aceh, the breakdown of disabilities illustrates a microcosm of a broader national landscape. As of 2020, data from the Aceh Provincial Social Office indicated that there were 2,509 individuals with physical disabilities, 928 with visual impairments, 1,290 with hearing impairments, 1,684 with mental health conditions, 572 with combined physical and cognitive disabilities, and an additional 960 with other forms of disabilities (Aceh, 2020). These statistics reflect not only the prevalence of disabilities within the region but also the critical need for comprehensive and accessible healthcare, social services, and educational opportunities tailored to meet the needs of these individuals. The data underscores the urgency for inclusive policies and practices that cater to the specific requirements of people with disabilities, thereby promoting their full participation in society and enhancing their quality of life. Given the increasing prevalence of disabilities, it is crucial to adopt a collaborative approach that integrates government initiatives with community efforts. This strategy seeks to reform the existing village governance paradigm, which often prioritizes self-interest and demonstrates the inconsistencies between government actions and societal engagement. A holistic approach encompassing the entire community is lacking, particularly at the village level. Furthermore, persistent discrimination continues to obstruct equal access to government services and hinders community unity within the same societal framework.

As articulated in Article 68, paragraph (1), letter c of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning villages, community participation in village development is a fundamental right. The law states that "Village communities have the right to express aspirations, suggestions, and oral or written opinions responsibly about the implementation of Village Government activities, the implementation of village development, village community development, and village community empowerment." This provision underscores the role of rural communities as active participants in human-oriented development processes, ultimately benefiting from their outcomes.

Villages, as essential community entities defined by legal territorial boundaries, are crucial for administering local governance and addressing communal interests (Sutrisno et al., 2024). They play a vital role in supporting developmental efforts that align with the broader aspirations of the Indonesian nation-state. However, the developmental processes managed by village authorities, in collaboration with the community, often fail to include persons with disabilities (Groce et al., 2011). According to Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, a person with a disability is defined as an individual who, over an extended period, faces physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory impairments. These conditions can limit their ability to interact with their environment, creating barriers that impede their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis (Longpoe & Adebisi, 2023).

Development initiatives must not only acknowledge but also actively integrate the unique perspectives and needs of persons with disabilities to promote an inclusive and equitable society. This integration is essential to ensure that all community members, regardless of their abilities, can fully engage in and benefit from the development process.

In Indonesia, individuals with disabilities are frequently marginalized within the policymaking process and are often treated as passive beneficiaries whose needs are addressed primarily through welfare, compensation, and healthcare services. This approach fails to uphold the fundamental principle of equality, significantly limiting opportunities for individuals to secure equal rights and active participation. Such a restrictive environment stems from a long-standing paradigm that views persons with disabilities through the lens of pity and dependency, focusing on care and compensation rather than empowerment (Dewi, 2023; Hatta & Sarkawi, 2011).

This issue is particularly evident in preliminary research conducted in *Lheu Eu* Village, located in the Darul Imarah District of the Aceh Besar Regency. This research indicates that persons with disabilities are notably excluded from participation in village development activities, despite their integral connection to the broader community. The principle of equal opportunity should be foundational, ensuring that persons with disabilities are given the means and access to fully realize their potential in all areas of state and communal governance.

The active engagement of individuals with disabilities in village development processes is a critical step towards ensuring equitable opportunities. This inclusion allows them to contribute their unique abilities and articulate their specific needs, which is not only a matter of social justice, but also a strategic approach to harnessing diverse perspectives that can lead to more innovative and sustainable community outcomes. The Indonesian government's ratification of the International Covenant on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through Law Number 19 of 2011 signifies a crucial commitment to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities. This ratification serves as a testament to the government's dedication to protecting, promoting, implementing, and respecting the inherent rights of persons with disabilities. It underscores the state's role as a guardian and promoter of inclusivity and equality, particularly for vulnerable citizens.

The marginalization of persons with disabilities in village development initiatives is frequently rooted in the entrenched stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes prevalent among the general public, governing authorities, and intellectual elites (Pramana, 2018). These detrimental mindsets, particularly those held by those in positions of power, can result in biased decision-making processes that perpetuate systemic discrimination. Consequently, individuals with disabilities are often trapped in a cycle of exclusion and inequality, are unable to break free, and achieve equal status within their communities. To address this issue, it is imperative to challenge and reform these attitudes, fostering the development of equitable and inclusive policies that ensure every member of society has the opportunity to participate fully and fairly in community development (Primadata et.al, 2022).

Participation as a concept represents a deliberate choice that signifies an individual's active involvement in various aspects of development. This includes engagement in economic activities, political processes, sociocultural advancement, and religious practices. Such participation is crucial for securing equitable opportunities and enabling persons with disabilities to express and realize their inherent potential. Febriantanto (2019) articulates that participation is not merely a passive state, but a conscious decision that drives individuals to actively contribute to collective goals. This active involvement fosters a sense of collective accountability and shared responsibility for community development.

In this context, participation extends beyond mere presence; it involves active engagement and contribution to decision-making processes that shape community life. Ensuring that people with disabilities are included in these processes is essential for creating an inclusive society that values diversity and leverages the unique perspectives of all its members. Such inclusive practices not only benefit individuals with disabilities but also enrich the community, leading to more comprehensive and sustainable development outcomes.

Therefore, it is critical for policymakers, community leaders, and society to recognize the importance of inclusive participation. By creating an environment that supports and encourages the active involvement of persons with disabilities, communities can move towards a more equitable and just society. This requires a concerted effort to dismantle stereotypes, eliminate discriminatory practices, and implement policies that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities. The challenge lies not only in changing laws and policies, but also in transforming societal attitudes and behaviors to ensure that inclusion becomes an integral part of community development practices.

The challenges faced by persons with disabilities can be broadly categorized into permanent and temporary limitations, as outlined by Anzari, Sarong, and Rasyid (2018). These limitations highlight the critical need for comprehensive accessibility measures that are essential for enabling individuals with disabilities to navigate their environments and participate in activities of their choice. This necessity is emphasized by Thohari (2014) and Propiona (2021), who underscore that accessibility is a foundational element for empowerment and self-determination.

The provision of appropriate facilitation is central to ensuring that persons with disabilities can exercise autonomy and fully engage in societal activities. This principle is enshrined in Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, particularly in Article 1 Number 2, which asserts that equality of opportunity is a fundamental right. The law mandates that persons with disabilities must be provided with necessary opportunities and access to express their potential in all areas of state and societal governance.

The active participation of persons with disabilities in community and village life is not merely a symbolic gesture; it is a profound expression of respect for and recognition of their inherent value within the social fabric. This signifies a commitment to acknowledging their unique contributions and ensuring that their specific needs are addressed through tailored support during village development processes. Integrating persons with disabilities into these initiatives fosters an environment of empowerment, where their abilities are nurtured and their potential is fully realized.

This inclusive approach is crucial for cultivating a society that values diversity and upholds every individual's dignity. By embracing the contributions of all members, particularly those with disabilities, communities can achieve comprehensive and sustainable progress. The recognition and integration of diverse perspectives enrich the collective advancement of society, highlighting the importance of inclusive development practices in achieving equitable and just outcomes.

## **2. Literature review**

This research is grounded in a thorough review of the existing literature, which offers essential insights and a contextual background. Prior studies have contributed significantly to the depth and scope of the analysis presented here, shaping the theoretical framework and empirical considerations of this study. Gutama and Widiyahseno (2020) the study, titled "Social Inclusion in Village Development," represents an in-depth exploration of the mechanisms of social inclusion within the framework of village development.

This study critically examines policy formulation and its implications for the realization of community rights, economic advancement, participatory governance, and local empowerment. Despite the intentions of these policies to foster development and inclusion, Gutama identified substantial barriers to progress, such as the slow pace of infrastructure reconstruction and a lack of innovation within the domestic industry sector. These findings underscore the need for a more dynamic approach to policy implementation and community engagement, to ensure that all societal segments are effectively integrated into the developmental agenda.

Additionally, the scholarly work by Larasati and Madalina, titled "Implementation of Law Number 6 of 2014 Concerning Villages Related to the Implementation of Inclusion Villages in the Fulfillment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Sukoharjo Regency," provides a detailed assessment of the

practical application of inclusive village initiatives within the Sukoharjo Regency. This study evaluates the effectiveness of these initiatives in safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities, focusing on key aspects such as participation, accessibility, and the elimination of stigma.

While Larasati acknowledges the progress made toward inclusion, the study highlights that full inclusion is yet to be realized. This shortfall is attributed to the absence of contemporary legislative frameworks explicitly mandating inclusion, limited local government awareness of disability issues, and exclusion of relevant activities from the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan. These findings emphasize the necessity for informed policymaking and strategic planning to enhance the inclusivity and empowerment of persons with disabilities within regional development frameworks.

In a scholarly investigation conducted by Probosiwi (2017) titled “Inclusion Village as a Manifestation of Sustainable Development for People with Disabilities,” the author delivers a comprehensive and critical analysis of the emerging initiatives aimed at the establishment of inclusive villages. These initiatives have been gaining traction across various regions, fueled by increasing awareness of the necessity to enhance the realization of the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Ratih’s research highlights the significance of these initiatives in promoting the active participation of persons with disabilities within developmental processes. This study asserts that a profound commitment from the community, coupled with a transformative shift in societal paradigms regarding disability, is crucial for the successful establishment of inclusive villages. Probosiwi advocates that these changes are fundamental to achieving a sustainable development framework that is genuinely inclusive and equitable for disabled individuals.

In the scholarly work “The Right to Obtain Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities,” Anzari et al. (2018) presents an in-depth examination of the current state of inclusive education within Banda Aceh City. The research findings indicate that local governments’ efforts to manage, develop, and enhance the quality of inclusive education have yet to reach their full potential. Anzari emphasizes the critical role of the government in elevating educational standards and strengthening inclusive educational institutions.

These institutions play a pivotal role in accommodating children who face various challenges, thereby ensuring equitable access to quality education. The study advocates for a concerted and intensified effort from the government to fulfill its responsibility in fostering an educational environment that is accessible, equitable, and supportive for every learner, irrespective of their circumstances.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study was conducted in *Lheu Eu* Village, located within the Darul Imarah District of the Aceh Besar Regency. The research methodology employed encompasses a normative juridical approach, which involves a comprehensive review and analysis of the legal literature, including relevant legislation, academic books, and scholarly legal journals. This approach is complemented by an empirical dimension that incorporates interviews with various respondents to gather first-hand insights. The legal data analyzed pertains to the specific population within the study area, which encompasses the village itself.

The primary focus of this research is to assess the significance of incorporating individuals with disabilities into village development initiatives and understanding the perspectives of the village government regarding these individuals. Consequently, this study emphasizes the role of participation in empowering people with disabilities, aiming to enhance their visibility and inclusion within the fabric of community life.

### **4. Results and Discussions**

In this critical section, we present and meticulously analyze the results, offering a comprehensive depiction of the study's outcomes. This segment represents a pivotal intersection where empirical data

and analytical interpretation converge, facilitating a nuanced understanding of research implications. The subsequent discussion transcends mere data reiteration, delving deeply into the significance of findings. Here, we explore the subtleties of the results, correlate them with the existing literature, and assess their practical applications.

This analysis scrutinizes the insights derived from the research and evaluates their relevance within the broader framework of disability rights and inclusive development. By combining the results with the discussion, this section aims to make a substantial contribution to the discourse on the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. The insights provided are anticipated to influence policymaking, guide future research, and catalyze transformative actions that uphold the principles of equality and accessibility.

#### ***4.1 Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Village Development***

Participation represents the fundamental right of citizens to engage in and advocate for their rights to contribute to the development and progress of society, the nation, and the state (Pettit & Musyoki, 2004). This principle was enshrined in the 1945 Constitution, which envisions a collaborative approach to nation-building that ensures inclusivity and collective effort. The Constitution underscores the necessity of involving all societal elements, including diverse cultural components, in the process of constructing and advancing societal, national, and state frameworks (Tamba, 2017).

The concept of participation, as defined in the Big Dictionary of Indonesia (KBBI, 2016), is characterized by the act of participating in activities or contributing to a cause. In this context, a participant engages in or contributes to an activity, thereby playing a role in collective effort. This definition highlights the importance of active involvement and engagement in various activities and reflects a broader understanding of participation as an essential element of civic rights and responsibilities.

Participation is not merely an act of involvement, but a critical component of democratic processes and societal development, ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from collective progress (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010; Pateman, 1975). Persons with disabilities are part of the village community who have the same rights and obligations as other communities, as stated in Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning villages:

Article 68 paragraph (1) Village communities have the right to

- a. Request and obtain information from the Village Government and supervise the implementation of the Village Government, village development, village community development, and village empowerment.
- b. Obtaining equal and fair service
- c. Conveying aspirations, suggestions, and oral or written opinions about the implementation of village government activities, the implementation of village development, and the empowerment of village communities.
- d. Select, select, and/or assign to
- e. Village Head;
- f. Village Apparatus;
- g. Members of Village Consultative Body
- h. Member of the Village Community Institution.
- i. Obtain protection and protection from disturbances of peace and order in the village.

Article 68 paragraph (2): The village community is obliged to:

- a. Building yourself and maintaining the village environment
- b. Encourage the creation of village government implementation activities, implementation of village development, village community development, and empowerment of good village communities
- c. Encouraging the creation of a safe, comfortable, and serene situation in the village
- d. Maintain and develop the value of consultancy, consensus, kinship, and cooperation in the village
- e. Participation in various activities in the village.

In contemporary social contexts, it is evident that social exclusion remains a prevalent issue, particularly affecting minority groups within communities, such as individuals with disabilities (Walsh, Scharf, & Keating, 2017). This phenomenon is notably observed in the context of village development initiatives within *Lheu Eu Darul Imarah Village*, Aceh Besar Regency.

To elucidate the factors contributing to the minimal participation of individuals with disabilities in the village development process, the author conducted interviews with respondents, including Ifwan Sahara, who had physical disabilities. Sahara highlighted several key issues that hindered the involvement of people with disabilities in these development efforts. First, it was observed that general community perceptions do not fully integrate individuals with disabilities into the social fabric of community life.

This marginalization adversely affects the confidence of these individuals, discouraging their active participation in developmental activities. Second, the lack of essential services tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities exacerbates this issue as these services are crucial for facilitating accessibility and inclusion in public village spaces. Third, owing to the minority status of this community group, there is a critical need for advocacy and support forums that focus on promoting disability rights and enhancing community awareness through targeted disability-based education (Sahara, 2021).

These findings underscore the imperative need to address and mitigate the barriers impeding the participation of disabled individuals in village development processes. By confronting these obstacles, we can foster more inclusive and participatory development practices that enhance the integration and empowerment of disabled individuals within village development frameworks. Despite the various limitations faced by people with disabilities, their ability to develop independently is significantly influenced by the support provided by the surrounding environment. Such conditions are unattainable, as long as the community continues to perceive individuals with disabilities as a problem rather than as active contributors.

Participation, in this context, is not merely an option but a conscious attitude that individuals adopt to engage in various facets of development, including the economic, political, socio-cultural, and religious domains. This proactive stance enables individuals with disabilities to access equal opportunities and to effectively channel their potential. Embracing this attitude fosters their role in achieving developmental goals and cultivating a sense of collective responsibility (Febriantanto 2019).

The Government of Indonesia has demonstrated its commitment to disability rights by ratifying Law Number 19 of 2011 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This commitment was further solidified with the enactment of Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, which affirms the right of individuals with disabilities to be free from various forms of negative stigma and enhances their opportunities for active involvement in village development efforts. The emphasis on active participation is further reinforced by Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning villages, which asserts that development efforts should commence at the village government level, integrating various community elements to create inclusive villages (Probosiwi, 2017).

Essentially, individuals with disabilities can be considered to have transcended their disability status when they receive comprehensive accessibility rights across different life domains. When these rights are effectively realized, individuals with disabilities are no longer positioned as mere objects of development but as active participants within the community. Access to appropriate facilities and infrastructure is crucial to fostering independence and prosperity.

The involvement of individuals with disabilities should extend beyond mere representation to encompass meaningful engagement in all the aspects of village development. This participation is directed towards achieving inclusive development, wherein the integration of individuals with disabilities as key actors occurs throughout the planning, budgeting, organizing, monitoring, and evaluation stages of development processes. Consequently, the benefits of development can be

equitably distributed among all community members, ensuring that the advantages are universally experienced (Bharata, Rani, Priyono, & Novitaningtyas, 2021).

#### **4.2 Persons with Disabilities Village Government Perspectives**

In this study, we undertake a comprehensive examination of how the policies and actions implemented by village governments align with the national legal standards established to promote the empowerment and welfare of individuals with disabilities. This exploration is of paramount importance for evaluating the efficacy of these legislative measures at the grassroots level and for identifying specific areas where improvements are necessary to cultivate a more inclusive and equitable society. To achieve this, we scrutinized the provisions outlined in Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, particularly focusing on Article 23, which enshrines the rights of individuals with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in societal activities.

By assessing the alignment between local governmental practices and these national legal standards, we aim to determine the extent to which these policies facilitate the actualization of the rights guaranteed by the law, thereby identifying gaps and opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of legislative frameworks in fostering true inclusivity and social equity.

1. Personal mobility with the provision of tools and ease of access
2. Getting the opportunity to live independently in society
3. Get training and mentoring to live independently
4. Self-determining or obtaining assistance from the Government and Local Government to establish the place and/or care of a surrogate family or family
5. Gain access to a wide range of services, whether provided at home, in settlements, or the community
6. Obtaining reasonable accommodation to participate in people's lives

The Village Government is the smallest unit in the Indonesian government structure that organizes village government affairs and the interests of village communities to create a prosperous village so that it can be developed through village empowerment efforts.

Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages Article 54 states the following:  
subsection (1)

Village Deliberation is a consultative forum attended by the Village Consultative Body, Village Government, and elements of the village community to discuss strategic matters in the implementation of the Village Government.

subsection (2)

Strategic matters, as referred to, include:

1. Village Arrangement;
2. Village Planning;
3. Village Cooperation;
4. Investment plans for villages
5. Establishment of the Village BUM
6. Addition and disposal of village assets
7. extraordinary events.

Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages Article 67 paragraph (2) Villages are obliged to

1. Protecting and maintaining the unity of the village community in the context of national harmony and the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.
2. Improving the quality of life of village communities.
3. Developing a Democratic Life.
4. Developing village community empowerment
5. Provide and improve services to village communities.

Article 68 paragraph (1) of the rights of the village community is as follows:

1. Request and obtain information from the Village Government and supervise the implementation of

- the Village Government, Village Development, Village Community Development, and empowerment of the village community.
2. Obtaining equal and fair service.
  3. Conveying aspirations, suggestions, and oral or written opinions about the implementation of village government activities, village development, village community development, and village community empowerment.

Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Number 13 of 2020 concerning Priorities for the Use of Village Funds in 2021 states that national priority programs according to village authority include inclusive village development:

1. Basic service activities for marginalized and vulnerable groups include women, children, the elderly, remote indigenous tribes and communities, believers, people with disabilities, poor people, and vulnerable groups.
2. Organizing citizen forums to prepare proposals for marginalized and vulnerable groups
3. Providing legal assistance to marginalized and vulnerable groups
4. Strengthening religious values and local wisdom to form social piety in the village; and
5. Other activities include realizing inclusive villages that are under the authority of the village and are decided in village deliberations.

The implementation of priority measures to facilitate the participation of individuals with disabilities in village development processes has not yet been executed to its full potential. This shortfall includes the inadequate provision of essential tools and resources designed to enhance accessibility for individuals with disabilities, thereby impeding their ability to access the necessary services and opportunities for independent living within the community. Effective participation of individuals with disabilities in the village development process remains unattainable if appropriate and sufficient facilities are not in place to support their engagement.

An interview conducted with the Secretary of *Lheu Eu Village*, located in the Darul Imarah District of Aceh Besar Regency, revealed several significant barriers that contributed to the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from the village development process. These obstacles include the following.

1. People with disabilities are still used as objects for village development.
2. Minority population of Persons with Disabilities
3. The Village Apparatus does not yet know the provisions of the laws and regulations governing the rights of persons with disabilities related to village development.
4. Access to assistance services obtained by persons with disabilities such as wheelchairs, and braille writings, is provided directly from the Aceh Besar Regency Social Service through data submitted by the Village Government (Setiawan, 2021)

The total population of persons with disabilities spread across *Lheu Eu Village*, Darul Imarah District, and Aceh Besar Regency is shown in the table below.

Table 1. People with Disabilities in Lheu Eu Village

No.	Gender	Type of Disabilities
1.	M	Physical disability
2.	F	Mental disability
3.	M	Physical disability
4.	F	Mental disability
5.	M	Physical disability
6.	F	Mental disability
7.	M	Physical disability
8.	M	Physical disability
9.	M	Mental and physical disabilities
10.	M	Physical disability
11.	M	Physical disability
12.	F	Physical disability
13.	M	Deaf

Based on the data, the *Lheu Eu* Village Government in Darul Imarah District, Aceh Besar Regency, continues to adhere to an outdated paradigm by referring to individuals with disabilities as per Law Number 4 of 1997 concerning Persons with Disabilities. This terminology has since been replaced with a designation that emphasizes equality among human beings.

Despite the small population of individuals with disabilities in *Lheu Eu* Village, they remain a marginalized group in local development efforts. The village government's approach, primarily limited to compiling the necessary data for aid and benefits from the Aceh Besar Regency Social Service, reflects a lack of shared responsibility for addressing the needs of persons with disabilities.

For development to be equitably experienced by all members of society, it is crucial that every citizen actively participates in the process. Individuals with disabilities often encounter significant obstacles that limit their access to and control over developmental opportunities, family support, and community resources. These barriers not only perpetuate injustice but also contribute to widespread discrimination against people with disabilities (Demartoto, 2005).

An inclusive development framework addresses these issues by incorporating several key dimensions. The social dimension focuses on achieving social justice and gender equality, ensuring that all individuals have equal opportunities and treatment, regardless of their abilities. The economic dimension emphasizes fostering economic growth that addresses basic needs and contributes to a welfare-oriented economy, aiming to uplift the living standards of all community members. Lastly, the environmental dimension is concerned with maintaining environmental balance and sustainability, ensuring that natural resources are preserved and managed effectively for both current and future generations (Primadata et.al, 2022).

Social exclusion has the potential to drive individuals into a state of poverty, creating a challenging cycle that is difficult to break. This exclusion not only exacerbates their economic hardships but also leads to the deprivation of fundamental rights and opportunities. Consequently, these individuals often face diminished social status, restricted access to employment opportunities and essential services, and a lack of participation in communal decision-making processes (Ra'is, 2018).

Three primary protective strategies were proposed to address and mitigate these issues. The first strategy involves a philosophical dimension, which emphasizes the protection of individuals with disabilities based on the intrinsic value of their dignity as human beings. This approach seeks to affirm their worth and ensure their recognition as equal members of the society. The second strategy focuses on the juridical dimension, which entails establishing legal frameworks designed to protect discriminatory practices. This legal approach ensures that individuals with disabilities have equal rights and safeguards for unfair treatment. The third strategy pertains to the sociological dimension, which underscores the fundamental principle of mutual interdependence between the state and society. This perspective highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing the interconnectedness of all individuals, reinforcing the notion that human life benefits from collective support and cooperation (Sari 2024).

Realization of the rights of individuals with disabilities requires a concerted and collaborative effort involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including the National Government, Municipal and Regional Authorities, the Private Sector, Environmental Organizations, and the broader community. This multifaceted approach is essential to ensure that the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities are adequately addressed, as emphasized by Nanda and Herawati (2021). Village governments play a crucial role within this collaborative framework. They are central to this alliance, tasked with ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights for all citizens regardless of their disability status.

Village governments are particularly important in this context because they are responsible for implementing and upholding legal statutes that guarantee the autonomy and community participation of disabled individuals. Their role extends beyond mere compliance with laws; it involves actively engaging with and supporting persons with disabilities who may constitute a minority within their communities and are often part of other vulnerable groups. This ongoing commitment is essential despite the relatively small proportion of individuals with disabilities compared to the general population.

Furthermore, the collaborative effort to safeguard the rights of individuals with disabilities is crucial, given that these individuals are entitled to special treatment, as prescribed by law. It is imperative that village governments continually strive to acquire accurate information and a comprehensive understanding of the position and role of persons with disabilities in village development. This ongoing effort ensures that the village government can effectively contribute to creating an inclusive environment in which the rights and needs of disabled individuals are recognized and addressed.

## **5. Conclusion**

The involvement of persons with disabilities in the village development process should not be restricted by their disability. To achieve equal opportunities in the development of *Lheu Eu* Village, Darul Imarah District, and Aceh Besar Regency, it is essential to include persons with disabilities as mandated by law. Such inclusive development requires persons with disabilities to participate actively in the community. However, despite the Village Government's responsibility, which is guided by legal provisions, persons with disabilities are often excluded from village development discussions. To ensure their involvement, there must be a collaborative and ongoing effort among the Village Government, businesses, academics, and disability advocates to work together effectively.

This strategic approach involves conducting a social analysis to map current social conditions and situations. This ensures that the Village Government does not make decisions in isolation when establishing the various village policies. Most importantly, it emphasizes the Village Government's ongoing responsibility to protect, respect, and fulfill human rights.

This study's findings have some limitations and are primarily based on qualitative data, which may not capture the full extent of the issues faced by persons with disabilities in different rural contexts. Additionally, the research was limited to a specific geographic area, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other regions. Therefore, we recommend that future research use quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to complement qualitative data and expand the geographical scope to make the results more generalizable. Comparative studies, the use of secondary data,

longitudinal research, and participatory approaches can also provide deeper and more representative insights.

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