

Development of Disabled-Friendly Tourism Infrastructure: Providing Accessibility for All Tourists

Denisa Putri

Tourism Study Program, Stiepar Yapari Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
putrydenisa@gmail.com

Delisa Nur Taufik

Tourism Study Program, Stiepar Yapari Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
delisanurtaufik01@gmail.com

Abstract . This research aims to assess the level of accessibility of tourism infrastructure for people with disabilities and analyze the challenges faced in its development. Qualitative research method was employed with descriptive analysis of data from sources such as the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and previous studies. The findings indicate that tourism infrastructure is still far from adequate in meeting the needs of tourists with disabilities. Lack of regulations, budget constraints, and insufficient staff training are the primary challenges. As a solution, the Development Model of Disability-Friendly Tourism Infrastructure is recommended, including physical design considerations for accessibility, staff training, and provision of easily accessible information. Collaboration among government, tourism industry, and civil society is crucial in creating a more inclusive tourism environment.

Keywords : Accessible tourism, Disability-friendly infrastructure, and Tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

The world of tourism has played a role in helping economic and cultural growth in a region and country. The success achieved in the tourism industry does not only depend on the number of tourist visits from abroad, but also on how inclusive and friendly the tourism destination is for everyone, including those who have needs. special or disabled, however, there are still many tourism destinations that do not pay proper attention to accessibility for tourists with disabilities. This also creates challenges for people with disabilities to the tourist experience which should be open to all.



Figure 1. Arrival of Foreign Tourists in 2011-2023

Source: Central Statistics Agency, 2024

Based on the picture above, it can be seen that the total number of foreign tourist visits up to the end of 2023 was recorded at 11,677,825, already starting to approach the pre-pandemic figure which reached 16,106,954 in 2019. The number of visits in 2023 increased by 98.30% compared to the previous year. If grouped by type of entrance, more foreign tourists enter through immigration gates than non-immigration gates. The number of foreign tourist visits through the immigration gate was 9,830,369 (84.18%) and non-immigration visits were 1,847,456 visits (15.82%). Based on these data, the specific number of tourists with disabilities is not available. The fact that the majority of tourists enter Indonesia through immigration indicates that tourism infrastructure needs to pay more attention to accessibility needs, including for people with disabilities. Therefore, creating tourism destinations that are friendlier to people with disabilities is important in ensuring inclusion and equality in enjoying the beauty of Indonesia for everyone.

Tourism destinations that pay attention to accessibility not only improve their image, but can also open up opportunities to attract the attention of new markets. To improve this, joint efforts from the government, tourism industry and communities representing disabilities are needed (Sholihah, 2016). Supportive regulations and policies, education and training for tourism industry staff, and collaboration with organizations and communities can help create a better and friendlier tourism environment for everyone (Rinekso, 2020). In this way, increasing accessibility in tourism is not only a moral responsibility, but an investment in sustainable economic growth and cultural diversity.

The tourism industry itself not only provides economic benefits, but also makes a good contribution to culture and society in an area. However, to date there has been little increased awareness of the importance of inclusion and accessibility for everyone in the tourism industry. According to *the World Tourism Organization (UNTWO)*, one of the main problems faced by tourists with disabilities is lack of accessibility in tourism destinations. This also includes limited access to tourist attractions, accommodation that is not disability friendly, lack of easily accessible public transportation, and lack of supporting facilities such as toilets according to needs. Thus, many tourists with disabilities feel limited in their choice of tourist destinations that they visit and this often makes their travel experience unpleasant. (Mahdy et al., 2024).

Previous research conducted by Zakiyah et al., (2016)entitled "Disability Friendly Tourism (Study of the Availability of Tourism Facilities and Accessibility for Disabilities in the City of Yogyakarta)" showed the results that tourism facilities and accessibility for people with disabilities were still very lacking, there were no regulations yet. requires tourist attractions to provide facilities and accessibility that are friendly to people with disabilities. Budget and human resources are also still limited for tourist managers to develop tourist attractions that are friendly to people with disabilities. Apart from that, previous research by Muhammad Hasanuddin (2019)entitled "Analysis of Tourism Facilities at the Batu City Transport Museum for Visitors with Disabilities" showed the results that at the Batu City Transport Museum, there were only 2 tourism facilities that met inclusive standards for visitors with disabilities, while 19 other facilities are still inadequate. The research also identified factors that support and hinder the availability of tourism facilities for visitors with disabilities at the museum. Supporting factors include a relevant mission, complete supporting facilities, and regional regulations that support accessibility. However, the obstacles lie in the lack of employee training in serving visitors with disabilities, as well as the lack of data about visitors with disabilities at the Batu City Tourism Office.

Therefore, developing tourism infrastructure that is disabled-friendly is important because of the need to increase accessibility for tourists with disabilities. This can also increase awareness of the importance of accessibility in the tourism industry to pay more attention to the needs of tourists with disabilities. Thus, this research aims to investigate approaches and best practices in developing disabled-friendly tourism infrastructure. So researchers want to study the title "**Development of Disabled-Friendly Tourism Infrastructure: Providing Accessibility for All Tourists.**"

ETIS THEORY STUDY

Disability

According to(Allo, 2022) Disability can be defined as a condition that results in physical, mental, or sensory limitations that affect a person's ability to participate fully in daily activities. Physical limitations can include mobility impairments or visual impairments, while mental limitations can include developmental disabilities or cognitive impairments. Sensory limitations include hearing or vision impairment. Disability can also be understood as an obstacle in social and environmental interactions experienced by a person due to the limitations

they have. This may include difficulties in accessing public facilities, difficulties in communicating with others, or experiences of discrimination or stigmatization because of their disability (Shaleh, 2018). Disability does not only depend on a person's physical or mental condition, but is also influenced by environmental factors, such as accessibility, social support, and opportunities to participate in society (Dhairyya et al., 2019). This approach emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all individuals, regardless of their condition or status.

Disabled Friendly Infrastructure Development Model

The Disability-Friendly Infrastructure Development Model is a framework designed to guide the development and improvement of tourism infrastructure by taking into account the needs and diversity of tourists with disabilities (Amnesti, 2021). This model integrates principles to create an environment that is accessible to everyone regardless of their physical or mental abilities. In the Disabled Friendly Infrastructure Development Model, there are several models that can be considered, including the following.

1. Physical design must address accessibility needs for all individuals. This includes the use of ramps and lifts for building access, level and unimpeded paths for pedestrians, and toilet facilities that suit needs. In addition, it is important to pay attention to adequate space and lighting arrangements to facilitate navigation for tourists with visual disabilities (Rahmawati et al., 2023).
2. Emphasize the importance of adequate social support and services which include training tourism staff on the needs of tourists with disabilities, as well as providing easily accessible information on the accessibility of facilities and services in tourism destinations. The use of technology can also be part of this model, such as smartphone-based tour guide apps that include information about accessibility and alternative routes for tourists with disabilities (Dacholfany et al., 2023).
3. Prioritize collaboration between government, the tourism industry and civil society. This includes the active involvement of disability advocacy organizations in the tourism infrastructure planning and development process (Suhendra, 2017).

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive analysis approach. Data is collected from various sources such as the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) for data on tourist visits, *the World Tourism Organization* (UNWTO) for information about accessibility in tourism, as well as books, reports, journals and other online sources. The data is then analyzed thoroughly to identify patterns and trends related to accessibility problems in tourism, as well as find solutions and recommendations for improving tourism infrastructure that is disabled-friendly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of research (1) are that tourism infrastructure is still far from adequate in meeting the needs of tourists with disabilities in various destinations. Data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that, despite an increase in the number of foreign tourist visits, accessibility for tourists with disabilities is still a major challenge that needs to be overcome. The fact that around 84.18% of total tourists enter through immigration gates highlights the urgency to improve infrastructure to pay more attention to accessibility needs, especially for people with disabilities.

Research results (2) data analysis from *the World Tourism Organization* (UNWTO) confirm that accessibility is an important aspect in global tourism development. However, there are still many tourism destinations that are inadequate in meeting the accessibility needs of tourists with disabilities.

Research results (3) Zakiyah et al. (2016) revealed that there are obstacles in tourism facilities and accessibility for people with disabilities,

Research results (3) Muhammad Hasanuddin (2019) stated that factors such as the lack of regulations requiring disabled-friendly facilities, limited budget resources, and lack of employee training in serving visitors with disabilities were the main obstacles.

Discussion

Infrastructure that is not disabled-friendly can hinder their tourism experience and may even make them unable to fully enjoy the tourist destination. This is not only detrimental to tourists with disabilities directly, but is also detrimental to the tourism industry as a whole because it can reduce the attractiveness of tourism destinations and the income generated. To overcome the results of this research, several Disable-Friendly Infrastructure Development Model solutions that can be applied according to researchers are as follows.

1. Ensure that all tourism facilities, including accommodation, tourist attractions, and means of transportation, are designed with the accessibility needs of all individuals in mind. This includes the use of ramps, lifts, level paths, and toilet facilities that comply with accessibility standards.
2. Pay attention to adequate space and lighting arrangements to facilitate navigation for tourists with visual disabilities.
3. Conduct regular training for tourism staff on the needs and services of tourists with disabilities.
4. Providing easily accessible information about the accessibility of tourism facilities and services for tourists with disabilities, both in the form of printed guides and technology-based tour guide applications.

By implementing the Disabled Friendly Infrastructure Development Model, it is hoped that there will be an increase in tourism accessibility for tourists with disabilities. This will create a more inclusive tourism environment, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their physical or mental abilities, can enjoy tourism destinations to the fullest.

UNWTO recognizes the importance of accessibility in global tourism development showing that this problem does not only occur locally, but is also a global concern. Thus, increasing tourism accessibility for tourists with disabilities is not just the responsibility of one country or one tourism destination, but is a challenge that must be addressed together by the global tourism community. Even though awareness of the importance of accessibility is increasing, there are still many tourism destinations that do not adequately meet the needs of tourists with disabilities. This shows that further efforts are still needed in advocating and encouraging the adoption of best practices in building disabled-friendly tourism infrastructure.

To overcome this problem, collaboration is needed between various stakeholders in the tourism industry, including government, the tourism industry, disability advocacy organizations, and civil society. Concrete steps must be taken to improve tourism accessibility, including the provision of disabled-friendly facilities, training of tourism staff in serving tourists with disabilities, and implementation of regulations that ensure compliance with accessibility standards. With strong support and cooperation from all stakeholders, it is hoped that there will be a significant increase in tourism accessibility for tourists with disabilities throughout the world. This will not only improve the tourism experience for tourists with disabilities, but will also strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism industry.

The results of research from Zakiyah et al. (2016) revealed that there are obstacles in tourism facilities and accessibility for people with disabilities. These findings look at the shortcomings and challenges faced by people with disabilities when traveling and visiting tourism destinations. One of the main obstacles identified in this research is the lack of disabled-friendly facilities in various tourism destinations. These facilities include accessibility to buildings and tourist areas, toilet facilities that suit their needs, and transportation that can be easily accessed by people with disabilities. The unavailability of adequate facilities can make tourists with disabilities feel limited in exploring destinations and disrupt their tourism experience.

Apart from that, problems occur in terms of accessibility of information and services for people with disabilities. Unavailable or inaccessible information about the accessibility of tourism facilities and services can make it difficult for people with disabilities to plan their trips. The lack of training of tourism staff in serving tourists with disabilities is also an additional barrier to providing friendly and inclusive services. To overcome these obstacles, comprehensive and collaborative action is needed from various related parties. The government needs to adopt regulations that require disabled-friendly facilities in all aspects of tourism and provide incentives for the tourism industry that meets accessibility standards. The tourism industry also needs to play an active role in providing disabled-friendly facilities and services and train their staff in serving tourists with disabilities well.

Muhammad Hasanuddin (2019) stated that there are several factors that are the main obstacles in providing disabled-friendly facilities and services in the tourism sector. Some of these factors include:

1. The lack of rules or regulations that require disabled-friendly facilities in the tourism industry is one of the main obstacles. Without clear and binding regulations, many tourism destinations tend to ignore the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.
2. Infrastructure development and providing disabled-friendly facilities requires quite a lot of financial investment, but not all tourism destinations have sufficient budgets to do this.
3. Lack of employee training in serving visitors with disabilities. Insufficient training regarding the needs and how to serve tourists with disabilities can cause discomfort and difficulties for them when visiting tourism destinations.

To overcome these obstacles, it is necessary to take steps that can be coordinated by various related parties. The government needs to adopt and implement regulations that require disabled-friendly facilities in every tourism destination. Apart from that, adequate budget allocation also needs to be prioritized for infrastructure development and the provision of disabled-friendly facilities. The tourism industry should invest in employee training to increase their understanding and skills in serving visitors with disabilities well. This training should include knowledge of the special needs of travelers with disabilities, as well as sensitive communication and interaction skills.

CONCLUSION

Disabled-friendly tourism infrastructure is important to ensure that everyone, including those with special needs, can enjoy tourism destinations to the fullest. Even though the number of tourists continues to increase, there are still many challenges related to accessibility for tourists with disabilities. The lack of regulations requiring disabled-friendly facilities, as well as limited budget and employee training, are the main obstacles in developing inclusive tourism infrastructure. To overcome this problem, steps need to be taken such as implementing a Disabled Friendly Infrastructure Development Model.

This model includes physical design that addresses accessibility needs, training of tourism staff, and the provision of easily accessible information about the accessibility of tourism facilities and services. Collaboration between government, the tourism industry and civil society is also important in this effort. By creating a more inclusive tourism environment, we not only ensure a better experience for travelers with disabilities, but also strengthen the tourism industry as a whole. Therefore, developing disabled-friendly tourism infrastructure is

not only a moral issue, but also an investment in sustainable economic growth and cultural diversity.

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