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## **Dynamics of Village Community Political Participation in the Digital Era: Problems and Solutions**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research explores the dynamics of village community political participation in the digital era with a focus on the context of problems and solutions which are the subject of analytical study, then this research uses a qualitative descriptive analytical method with a desk study approach. The findings indicate that village community participation in the digital era has two problems, namely lack of access to technology which has implications for a lack of understanding of the information obtained, where this connection is found through the village digital literacy index. The second is the low level of trust that exists, where in fact village communities tend to be indoctrinated with unethical political behavior, so that the tendency towards political promises that are initiated is not felt by village communities which ultimately gives rise to community distrust of certain political actors or figures. In the end, the solution designed requires efforts from the government to provide information supporting infrastructure, digital literacy education, community involvement in the digital political process and protection of community data in accessing information through the media.

**Keywords: Political Participation, Village Community, Digital Literacy, Data Protection.**

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dinamika partisipasi politik masyarakat desa di era digital dengan fokus pada konteks permasalahan dan solusi yang menjadi kajian analisis, lalu penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif analitis dengan pendekatan *desk study*. Hasil temuan, mengindikasikan bahwa partisipasi masyarakat desa di era digital memiliki dua problem yakni kurangnya akses teknologi yang berimplikasi pada kurangnya pemahaman terhadap informasi yang diperoleh dimana keterkaitan ini ditemukan melalui indeks literasi digital desa. Kedua yaitu rendahnya tingkat kepercayaan yang ada, dimana secara fakta masyarakat desa cenderung didoktrinasi dengan perilaku politik yang tidak etis, sehingga kecenderungan akan janji politik yang digagas tidak dirasakan oleh masyarakat desa yang akhirnya menimbulkan ketidakpercayaan masyarakat kepada aktor atau figur politik tertentu. Diakhir, solusi yang dirancang perlu adanya upaya dari pemerintah dalam penyediaan infrastruktur pendukung informasi, pendidikan literasi digital, melibatkan masyarakat dalam proses politik digital dan perlindungan data masyarakat dalam mengakses informasi melalui media.

**Keywords: Partisipasi Politik, Masyarakat Desa, Literasi Digital, Perlindungan Data.**

## INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of political participation is still an issue that has recently been highlighted because it causes negative upheavals for society, including conflicts, protests, and other things that hurt a negative impact on society. If observed, political participation is certainly a mechanism for countries that run a democratic system, the aim of which is to guarantee every citizen's right to be involved in the state process and be able to contribute ideas to the political process.(Yandri, n.d.)

Then, political participation also involves several actors involved in politics, be it campaigns, lobbying processes carried out by representatives of existing parties and groups to obtain voting rights in order to gain power and be able to determine the direction of policy both at the central level and at the regional level, in addition to That is if it is understood that political participation is certainly an indicator in determining that a country running a democratic system is able to accommodate every community's rights as a real aspiration.(Partisipasi et al., n.d.) This conceptualization is in line with the views of a political scientist, namely Herbert Mc Closky, who put forward a definition of political participation, namely the voluntary activities of citizens through the way they take part in the process of selecting rulers and directly and indirectly in the process of making or forming public policies.(Mirriam Budhiardjo, 1982, p. h.12)

For this reason, it can be concluded that political participation is an activity that involves citizens in taking part in a political activity and participating in decisions or policies that have been made or even decided by the government. So, participation is also an important thing in the basic principles of good governance, so that many various groups (stakeholders) place participation as an initial effort to initiate reform, especially in Indonesia in 1998.

Furthermore, in the digital era, political participation is shifting to a more massive direction considering that technological advances are able to change the political spectrum to be more interactive and responsive in accommodating people's rights and aspirations through digital media such as content and video to attract community involvement in a process that is recognized as a new model in build political participation.(Theocharis et al, n.d.)

Therefore, technological developments in this era have had a huge impact on the process of political democracy which includes participation as a mechanism, such as the use of social media as a political platform that is easily accessible to all groups, for example, from the government side in disseminating programs. work, then politicians and even political parties in increasing electability and popularity, even civil society which generally uses digital media to access information that is currently developing.(Ruess et al., 2022)

Apart from that, digital media has also begun to enter villages in Indonesia, although not yet, because digital media in villages still lacks literacy and inadequate supporting infrastructure,(Sihotang et al, n.d.) However, the contextual aspect of this digital media is educating the public as users to access the internet in order to obtain information that is circulated and disseminated to the public.

Then, regarding this matter, digital politics through the media can now be a forum for accumulating public voices in politics, but along with the development of digital politics in society today there is a positive thing, namely that it can be easier to respond to the information needed, so that the media Digital provides space for people to provide criticism.

Therefore, indirectly digital media currently provides opportunities for people to respond directly or encourage people to discuss politics online. Behind this, of course technology provides easy access to information and interaction for society and political actors which basically still creates weaknesses, where in percentage terms the increase in the spread of disinformation and polarization on social media has implications for political discourse in society. Therefore, concrete efforts are needed to increase digital literacy and manage the negative impact of technology on political participation.

Then, realizing social justice and community welfare through political participation is still a dream that is difficult or even far from expectations among the community. To illustrate, despite increasing political participation, there are still significant inequalities in the distribution of policies and resources. Therefore, there needs to be a critical effort towards the extent to which political participation is able to produce positive changes in the social and economic structure of the communities involved in the process.

If traced, the people in the village still experience a lack of knowledge about politics, due to the fact that political actors in providing political education are not correctly and precisely, but instead only convey political promises which in reality are far from expectations because of the interest in obtaining voting rights to occupy the desired position.

Moreover, efforts initiated by political actors still use methods that have become routine to influence political education to the existing community through money politics and other things in order to provide empathy for people who still live in the lower class economy, for this reason phenomena like this is still maintained by political actors at the

local level in order to obtain voting rights from the community as participants in the political process.

Therefore, healthy political participation should be accompanied by a high level of transparency from the government and political institutions or parties. If information related to political policies and decisions is not easily accessible to the public, this can harm the basic principles of democracy that underlie political participation itself. And what is also an important point is the need to reform the political financing system to ensure that political participation is not solely the domain of those who have material wealth.

Overall, in formulating community political participation in the digital media era, especially communities in villages, it is necessary to pay attention to the cultural context and local values, of which each community has unique and certainly different characteristics. In this way, political participation should become a form of involvement that continues to develop in society in order to accommodate existing community interests and rights. (LinTang et al, 2020)

Using this illustration, this research will reveal the dynamics of political participation in village communities in the digital era using the conceptual theory of political participation and digital politics to analyze the extent to which community participation, especially in villages, is involved in the political process, then this research will ask questions that will be revealed, namely: what main obstacles and solutions to increase political participation of village communities through digital platforms?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Journal by Aulia Ningtyas with the title "Development of Democracy in the Digital Era: Challenges and Prospects". This research uses a holistic and diverse approach by conducting case study research. This research aims to present an overview of the challenges and prospects for developing democracy in the digital era. This research discusses the development of democracy in the digital era through digital technology such as social media and the magnitude of the power of political participation, government transparency and the quality of public discussion. With a deep understanding of these dynamics, in the future we will be able to design policies and practices that encourage inclusive and sustainable democratic development in the digital era. (Prospek, n.d.)

Journal by Tamara Len Sukma Br Girsang, entitled "Development of Democracy in the Digital Era, Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Countries". This research discusses the dynamics of democratic development in the digital era as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by various developing countries. In this context, there are factors involved such as digital literacy, social media regulations, and data protection that are the subject of debate. So, with the development of digital-based democracy, we will be able to create a more effective framework and increase political participation so that we can realize democratic government for the people of developing countries. (Len & Br, 2023)

Journal by Silvia Salsabila Laowe, entitled "Challenges of Political Ethics in the Digital Era: Social and Technological Perspectives". This research uses a mixed-methods approach and qualitative and quantitative research types. This research aims to describe political ethical challenges that arise in the context of the digital era from a social and technological perspective. This research discusses the impact of digital technology on

politics and social values. Apart from that, this research also discusses various contemporary debates and issues related to political ethics in the digital era, such as data privacy, disinformation, political polarization, and responsibility. social media platforms.(Laowe, n.d.)

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative descriptive analytical method with a desk study approach, which is intended that this research involves using data from previous research to explore new research questions or apply analysis strategies that were not included in the original analysis, then explains that the data re-analysis process can be different from original researchers, because they are often more objective in their assessment of existing data.(Ruggiano & Perry, 2019)

Meanwhile, the method used in this research involves collecting, analyzing and interpreting secondary data according to the focus of the study. Then, this desk study approach is relevant to the contextual context of the digital era and current technological advances, which provides flexibility in the analysis process by researchers. Finally, secondary data sources used include books, journal articles, proceeding articles, legal documents, and documents related to the main research topic.(Moleong. Lexy J, n.d.)

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

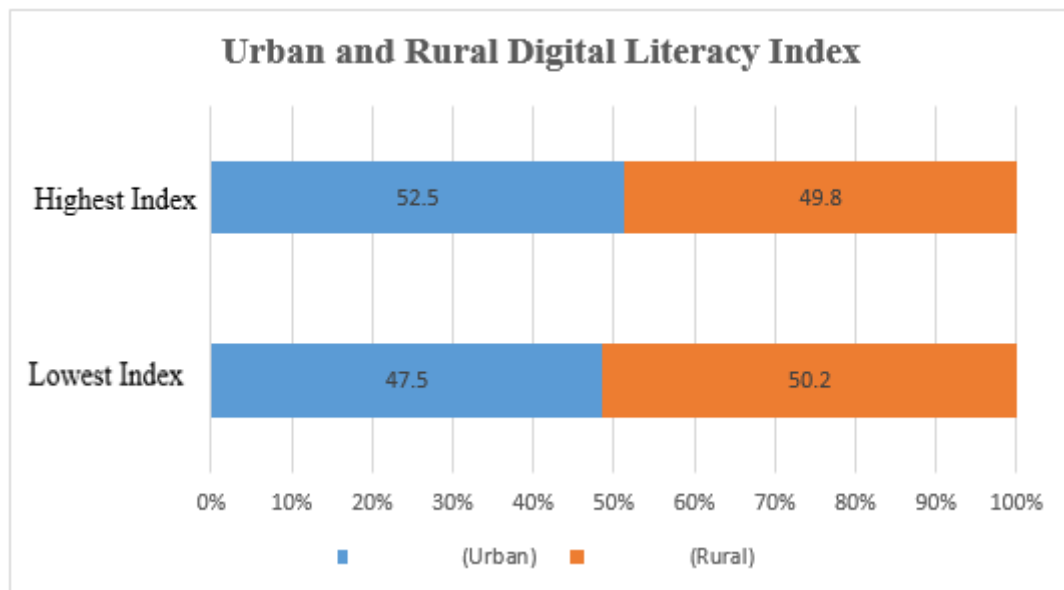
The urgency of community political participation, especially in villages, is an important element that cannot be ignored by the government or political actors who are practically involved in the political process in order to seek the public's voice in order to obtain the desired power or position. However, the importance of understanding the process of village community political participation in the digital era is a reference that is still relevant to the dynamics in Indonesia because the development model adopted by the Indonesian state is still bottom-up, so this directly touches on the levels of society at the bottom.(Damayanti & Syarifuddin, 2020)

For this reason, in reality political participation of village communities or at the lower level will be a benchmark for development which is achieved through community participation mechanisms which voice aspirations so that their rights can be heard and implemented through real programs and felt by the community, meanwhile the concept adopted through political participation Village communities currently still have problems which of course have not been optimally resolved and it can be said that there is a need for constructive solutions so that existing problems can be resolved proportionally, so below are the results of the analysis which are described systematically.

### **Problems of Village Community Political Participation in the Digital Era Lack of Access To Technology**

The problematic access to technology among rural communities is one of the critical obstacles to increasing political participation in the current digital era. This happens because most village residents face physical limitations in obtaining technological devices, but also lack digital knowledge and literacy. The following is comparative data on digital literacy in both cities and villages.

**Figure 1. Urban and Rural Digital Literacy Index**



Source: Katadata Insight Center (KIC), Processed Data (2024)

Based on existing data, the percentage of digital literacy rates for both cities and villages is very far, where the highest index-related coverage is at 2.7% for the difference in comparison between cities and villages, meaning that from this position it states that access to technology for people in There are still very few villages and there is a need for concrete efforts from the government to increase digital literacy to facilitate the political participation of people in rural areas through the information provided.

Then, along with technological advances, political participation is increasingly closely linked to the availability and understanding of digital tools, for example, village residents who are marginalized from access to technology tend to be left behind based on data found from the percentage of existing figures, as well as in getting political information as well as the community. Villages in particular only receive information from certain actors who convey information to the community, therefore the information obtained is often not linear with what the community feels.

In this context, unequal access to technology not only creates information imbalances but also deepens the gap in political participation between rural and urban areas. So, the government and related institutions need to recognize that empowering village communities in the digital era requires a holistic and sustainable approach. Thus, the idea of digital literacy which includes aspects of understanding technology and providing better access to digital infrastructure in villages needs to be prioritized in the context of political participation in villages.

### **Low Level Of Trust**

The low level of trust regarding village community political participation in the digital era still leaves serious problems that require efforts to maximize the aspirations obtained. However, fundamentally the lack of transparency in the decision-making process at the village level at this time can damage public trust, such as political maneuvers carried out

by several political actors to provide biased information, especially during political contestation which can influence the level of public trust. The process of political participation that was carried out was not neutral, and there was even serious intimidation so that people became quite unsure about political participation which should be democratic and safe.

Related to this, reporting can increase the independence of social media as a political source, then its impact will have an impact on village communities that are vulnerable to the spread of incorrect information and influence their perception of political dynamics, this is a fundamental challenge in forming it. Strong foundation of trust among village residents, (Bumsoo Kim & Jennifer Hoewe, 2020) it is no less important than protection regarding data security and privacy in the use of digital technology can also increase the level of trust in society.

Furthermore, from the perspective of village communities who do not yet fully understand the consequences of using digital technology, they may be concerned about the misuse of their data or the security risks associated with online political participation, so that the potential for low trust will further degrade political participation itself and from This will result in a low level of direct involvement of village communities in the decision-making process, thereby creating the perception that their voices are not valued or ignored. Thus, this phenomenon can damage their trust in the implementation of political participation as a means of achieving concrete change and even be felt by the community as elements involved in it.

### **Solutions to Village Community Political Problems in the Digital Era**

If discussing problems related to lack of access to technology and low levels of trust in the political participation of village communities in the digital era, there needs to be a rational and appropriate solution, the following solutions need to be considered. First, in dealing with the lack of access to technology, efforts need to be made that correlate with digital infrastructure, especially in villages, in this case, the government must focus on providing affordable internet access and intensive digital literacy training for the community with programs that are right on target and educate the community. to be able to be truly involved and able to think critically with the information obtained accurately and validly, meaning that these programs must be inclusive and in accordance with existing community preferences, as well as ensuring that all levels of village society, including the older and less educated, can access and understand digital technology.

Second, to overcome low levels of trust and of course, transparency in the decision-making process needs to be increased and monitored jointly. In this context, the village government must ensure that political information is presented objectively and neutrally and avoids political bias that could damage community trust, for example holding open discussion forums and actively listening to community aspirations, this can build trust in political participation in the village. This means that qualitatively and quantitatively it will improve because targeted education continues to be provided.

Apart from that, it is necessary to carry out an outreach campaign to increase critical media literacy among the public regarding the information they receive, especially through social media where bias or information that is not linear with existing facts is often found. So, this context emphasizes that adaptive political education can help village communities understand political dynamics, identify reliable information, and assess the impact of their political participation.

Third, the issue of data security and privacy is also an important concern because this will become a commodity for individuals who misuse existing data for certain interests, for this reason, the government must implement strong policies to protect the personal information of village residents so that their rights can be protected. with the applicable rules and regulations, bearing in mind that the current presence of the ITE (Electronic Information and Transactions) law is still not fully optimal because its objectivity has not been implemented correctly and precisely or is being misused by irresponsible individuals. So, having a transparent and trustworthy data protection mechanism will help build public trust in the use of digital technology in a political context.

Fourth, the empowerment of village communities in the decision-making process needs to be improved. Inclusive participatory mechanisms, such as holding village deliberations and participatory forums, can give villagers the feeling that their voices are valued and have a real impact on political decisions. Thus, it is hoped that these solutions can stimulate more active political participation and increase the level of trust of village communities in the digital era.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the current digital era, social media has an important role, especially in public opinion and political participation. The role of social media in the digital era brings changes, such as the way people get information, communicate and participate in the world of politics. However, the increasing increase in social media nowadays is not fully felt by the community, especially people who live in villages. There are still many people in villages who have little access to social media so that people who live in villages are still far behind people who live in urban areas. Therefore, what makes village communities lag far behind is because in villages there are still minimal networks, electricity, unstable economic growth so that many village communities focus more on working for family needs such as food, drink, educational needs for their children, rather than for buy electronic goods such as sophisticated cellphones, TVs and so on. So, to increase political participation in village communities, the government must evaluate or provide outreach using digital platforms, such as introducing social media among village communities, so that village communities are not left behind. Apart from that, the government must also pay attention to the complaints of people in villages, for example, there are problems with the network because the network is not yet adequate, so it is difficult for village people to use social media, therefore the government can provide solutions or facilities for networks in villages.

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