

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE 2024 ELECTION OF THE REGENT AND DEPUTY REGENT OF SOUTHEAST ACEH REGENCY IN BAMBEL DISTRICT

Muhammad Harpandi¹, Abu Sahrin²

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: fandibambel@gmail.com

Article Info

Article history:

Received :

Revised :

Accepted :

Available online

<http://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/analytica>

E-ISSN: 2541-5263

P-ISSN: 1411-4380



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license

ABSTRACT

This study is to analyze the methods of preparation and extent of community involvement in the implementation of the Regent and Deputy Regent elections in Southeast Aceh Regency, specifically in Babel District, in 2024. Regional head elections are a fundamental component of the democratic framework, where active community participation serves as a measure of the efficacy of the democratic process at the local level. This research employs a qualitative methodology using descriptive techniques, including in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation analysis involving election organizers, community leaders, and voters. The study's findings demonstrate that the Independent Election Commission (KIP) and the District Election Committee (PPK) have executed their preparations in accordance with the prescribed steps, despite many technical and social challenges. Meanwhile, community participation shows a positive trend, driven by increased political awareness and the active role of traditional and religious leaders in encouraging residents to exercise their right to vote. However, there are still challenges in the form of apathy among some young voters and the influence of money politics. This study recommends the need to strengthen local-based political education to improve the quality of voter participation in the future.

Keywords: Political participation, regional head elections, election preparation, Southeast Aceh, Babel District.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a nation and state that adheres to a democratic system, aims to improve social, economic, and educational welfare, making the public play a vital role in the ongoing process of democracy. Therefore, the public's role cannot be separated from the direct general election process, as it is a crucial factor in the continuity of democracy. Preparation and participation in the election of the Regent and Deputy Regent are a form of public awareness and readiness to develop a democratic environment. Preparation and participation in the lead-up to the election of the Regent and Deputy Regent also represent planning and efforts to involve the public, individuals, or groups, in carrying out activities.

Research into the preparation and participation in the election of the Regent and Deputy Regent is crucial to determine the extent of public participation in overseeing and ensuring the success of the election. In this regard, political awareness is highly desirable (Blais, 2010; Santas, 2020).

High political awareness leads to high levels of preparation and participation in the election of the Regent and Deputy Regent. Low political awareness leads to low levels of preparation and participation in the election of the Regent and Deputy Regent. In preparation for the participants for the election of the Regent and Deputy Regent, each candidate campaigns for each vision and mission of each candidate pair in order to seek public attention and support, this makes the election contest interesting and attracts the attention of the local community, especially Southeast Aceh Regency (Gastil et al., 2002; Clinton et al., 2021). Every street will be found several posters and billboards of the candidates and candidates for regent and deputy regent to gain the trust and trust of each village and community, even in several events that will be held by the community or weddings or circumcision celebrations of the apostle and misfortune (death) each candidate pair always appears brilliantly showing their enthusiasm to always be seen to care about the community by providing various assistance or basic necessities and every need of the community as well as banners of the candidates that are stretched on the streets where the event is held (Omotola & Aiyedogbon, 2012).

The Regent and Deputy Regent Election contestants that will be held in November make the candidate pairs compete to brand themselves and increase their friendship with village leaders, religious and community leaders in order to find more sympathizers, so it is appropriate that the candidate pairs must always be ready and alert to continue to visit various areas up to remote areas and borders of Southeast Aceh Regency from Lawe Pakam to Rumah Bundar and Ketambe, it continues to keep the sympathizers intact and the things that the candidate pairs hope for can be realized well (Ekman & Amnå, 2012;). That way, each candidate maximizes the time and opportunities available, by continuing to show a form of expansion and concern for the community, and defeating the potential and every candidate who wants to compete in the 2024 Regent and Deputy Regent election both directly facing the community or digitally through social media, such as Facebook which is the most powerful and favorite media, especially the people of Southeast Aceh, who are the most and dominate using Facebook media facilities in social media (Towner, 2013; Yang & DeHart, 2016).

Greeting the community and friends of Dumai (cyberspace) through Facebook. By sympathizers of the Regent and Deputy Regent candidates, it is very effective and easy in terms of showing the vision and mission of each candidate. So it is not surprising, when they want to open a social media account, many sympathizers and loyalists of the Regent and Deputy Regent candidates ask for friendship (Add Friends) new accounts, the goal is to show the candidates and active candidate pairs through social media such as; showing contributions of social assistance and social services (active in helping the community and playing a role in helping and facilitating community work/social services, it is intended to be built and shown to the community through social media to the people of Southeast Aceh in order to show the candidate pairs of each candidate who are good and wise and have a vision and mission of renewal for a better Southeast Aceh.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method, which seeks to understand phenomena related to the experiences of research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, and action, through holistic descriptions articulated in words and language in a specific natural context, utilizing a variety of natural methodologies (Yin, 2003). Researchers use data obtained through qualitative methods for analysis with an analytical descriptive approach. Descriptive techniques have two main characteristics: first, focusing on contemporary issues or actual problems, and second, describing facts related to the research topic as they are, accompanied by rational and adequate interpretations.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The Regional Head and Deputy Head Election, commonly referred to as Pilkada, is a general election in Indonesia in which local citizens, who meet legislative requirements, directly elect their Regional Head and Deputy Head. Simultaneous direct regional head elections aim to reduce the social, political, and economic costs associated with the democratic process of electing regional heads. The 2020 Regent and Deputy Regent Election for Southeast Aceh Regency was conducted by the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Southeast Aceh Regency concurrently with the November Regional Head Election, which aims to elect the Regent and Deputy Regent for the 2019-2024 term. In this election, three pairs of candidates competed, in accordance with the Decree of the Southeast Aceh Regency General Elections Commission concerning the allocation of ballot numbers and the list of candidate pairs for the 2024 Regent and Deputy Regent election for Southeast Aceh Regency.

The candidates are: 1) Salim Fahri and Herry Alhilal; 2) Raidin Pinim and Syahrizal; and 3) Pandi Sikel and Khairul Abdi. Research findings indicate that the Southeast Aceh Regency General Elections Commission (KPU), which is responsible for organizing the 2024 regent and vice regent elections, has outlined the election process into five main stages: preparation, nomination, campaign, voting, and post-election activities. Throughout the preparation phase, the Southeast Aceh Regency KPU collaborated with all sub-districts in the region, initiated registration, and appointed sub-district election committees (PPK), voting committees (PPS), and polling organizing groups (KPPS). Throughout the campaign period, the agenda included the presentation of their visions and missions, work programs, and the fulfillment of political commitments by the three candidate pairs through public discussions organized by the Southeast Aceh Regency KPU. Regarding the Framework for Implementing Public or Open Debates for the 2024 Southeast Aceh Regent and Vice Regent Election.

The election period, which falls on December 27, 2024, coincides with the simultaneous regional head elections across the Republic of Indonesia, which aim to elect the Governor, Regent, and Mayor. The election of the Southeast Aceh Regent and Vice Regent is estimated to involve 149,460 voters. However, participation only reached 128,563, resulting in a voter turnout of 86.01% of the total registered voters. A careful review of various online media sources confirmed that no election violations were found during the election process for the regent and vice-regent of Southeast Aceh Regency.

This figure demonstrates that election success is inherently linked to public political engagement. Participation fundamentally assesses citizens' capacity to translate symbols of authority (public welfare policies and their implementation) into personal symbols. The evolution of the political system and democracy, particularly in the regions, has shown significant progress. This is evident, among other things, in the high public enthusiasm for each election, from registration to voting day (Fisher, 2012).

Election success is inherently linked to public political engagement. Participation fundamentally assesses citizens' capacity to translate symbols of authority (public welfare policies and their implementation) into personal symbols. The evolution of political systems and democracy, particularly in the regions, has shown significant progress. This is evident, among other things, in the high public enthusiasm for each election, from registration to voting day.

Public political engagement will align with a stable political process (plans aimed at improving public welfare and their implementation) until it becomes individual symbols. The advancement of political systems and democracy, particularly in these areas, has shown significant progress. This is evident, among other things, in the high public enthusiasm for each election, from registration to voting day. Public political engagement will occur in line with a stable political process.

Furthermore, regarding public political engagement, Ramlan Surbakti (2007) emphasizes that it is classified into two categories: active participation and passive participation. Active involvement includes formulating general policies, proposing alternative policies that deviate from government proposals, providing criticism and suggestions for policy change, fulfilling tax obligations, and electing government officials. Conversely, actions included in passive involvement include complying with the government, accepting, and implementing all government decisions. Milbart and Goel categorize public political involvement into several types: first, apathetic, referring to individuals who abstain from participation and disengage from the political process. Second, spectator, referring to individuals who have participated in general elections by voting at least once. Third, gladiator, referring to individuals actively involved in the political process, including communicators, direct interaction specialists, party activists, campaign workers, and community organizers.

Miriam Budiarjo (2009) defines political participation as the active involvement of individuals or groups in political life, particularly through the election of state leaders who directly or indirectly influence government policy (public policy). Keith Faulks argues that political participation includes the active involvement of individuals or organizations in government processes that affect their lives. Political engagement encompasses the activities or involvement of citizens in the government process, aimed at influencing the direction of government. Political activity will impact individual lives.

Efforts to Increase Public Political Participation in 2024

Elections serve as a mechanism for implementing democracy. It could be argued that democracy depends on elections. However, elections are not the goal. Elections serve solely as a mechanism for electing members of parliament and executive leaders at the central and regional levels. The goals of the nation and state, among others, are to advance the general welfare and improve the nation's intellectual life, as articulated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. General elections are the most important institution

in every democratic state, especially in a republic like Indonesia. This institution aims to uphold three essential foundations of democracy: public sovereignty, government legitimacy, and periodic change of government.

These three principles aim to uphold and implement the ideal of independence, prevent the entrenching of particular interests in government entities, and prohibit the substitution of popular sovereignty for the sovereignty of the ruler (Dalton, 2011). Active public participation in monitoring the election process is a crucial indicator of the success and quality of democratic elections. Mirriam Budiarjo defines political engagement as the involvement of individuals or groups in political life, which includes the selection of national leaders and, directly or indirectly, influencing government policy. These activities include actions such as participating in elections, attending rallies, interacting with or lobbying government officials or members of parliament, joining political parties or social movements that advocate for direct action, and others.

In addition to providing public education and outreach, election education aims to inform citizens about democracy and the importance of public involvement in ensuring the success of general and regional elections. Furthermore, these initiatives aim to increase public engagement in fair elections and accountable political implementation (Zvulun & Harel, 2018).

The General Elections Commission (KPU) strives to increase public engagement in the electoral process while encouraging first-time voters to participate. This engagement is crucial for understanding engagement in Indonesian politics. In addition to generating interest, providing knowledge and instruction to first-time voters is crucial to enabling them to make informed decisions. In Indonesia, voters aged 17-21, especially students, are frequently discussed, and the KPU strives to encourage their active participation in elections.

All parties agree that they want to prevent first-time voters from becoming politically undecided or experiencing election hesitation. The involvement of all voters, especially first-time voters, is crucial for a better democratic system, encompassing both the participant and subject levels. At both levels, voters are already knowledgeable and actively involved in all stages of the election (Meredith, 2009). The techniques used by election organizers and the government to engage first-time voters, who are predominantly young individuals, must align with constructive youth initiatives. Election organizers can organize election education seminars for university students and youth community meetings.

By providing political education to first-time voters, the goal is to ensure their genuine involvement in the electoral process, rather than simply attending the polling station and casting a ballot as a single event. Public involvement and participation are crucial for democracy, as democracy encompasses not only the objectives of government choices but also the comprehensive decision-making process.

Public participation aims to: 1) Disseminate information regarding election stages, schedules, and initiatives. 2) Increase public knowledge, understanding, and awareness of rights and responsibilities in the election process. 3) Increase voter involvement in elections. Joko J. Prihatmoko (2003) emphasized that the purpose of socialization is to foster political identity, increase political awareness, and encourage citizen political involvement (Valentino, 2011).

Political education is crucial for fostering a culture of democracy in society. Political education is the responsibility of all members of society, including educational institutions and families. According to Arbi Sanit (1997), "political participation is the collective involvement of society in the process of selecting leaders, formulating public policy, and overseeing government operations." Elections serve as a vital mechanism for encouraging public involvement in determining who has the right to govern the Indonesian state, including the legislative and executive bodies. The success of the 2024 elections depends on the collaboration of various parties to foster an appreciation of the importance of public involvement in political participation activities.

Indonesia operates under a democratic political system. The implementation of democratic principles requires maximum political freedom for all citizens, enabling them to actively participate in shaping national progress. One way to achieve this is by electing leaders through direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair elections. Elections are organized by an autonomous and permanent general election commission.

Politics is crucial to national life, facilitating the achievement of a robust democracy. Political education aims to enhance individuals' understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, foster a progressive perspective, and instill a sense of responsibility in national and state affairs, thus enabling them to influence the future direction of the country or region. Currently, many negative perceptions have emerged regarding all political issues. Politics encompasses an essential analysis of a prosperous national life. As Indonesian citizens, we must understand democratic politics based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution to ensure the smooth functioning of national and state affairs.

According to Aristotle, politics is the effort of citizens to achieve the common good. Conversely, most people make politics a scapegoat, viewing it solely as a means to gain power. This, in reality, is the collective responsibility of the government, political party elites, candidates, political parties, and the public. To prevent this misunderstanding, all parties must engage in political education and socialization to achieve true democracy and ensure participation in elections. Political education must be understood as an effort to build the foundations of society and the state. The advancement of political education must be designed to empower and raise people's aspirations to participate in nation-building. All individuals, regardless of their affiliation, have the right to access political education. This is to prevent discrimination against Indonesian youth in political discourse. Political education is a crucial function of political parties, providing information to the public and a mechanism for exercising popular sovereignty.

Indonesia needs transparent and fair election procedures to address issues of competition. This aligns with the country's philosophical principles, Pancasila, and the 1945 Constitution. An independent election system was established with the establishment of the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) under Law No. 22 of 2007, which regulates election administration. Bawaslu's primary responsibility is to supervise, address, and prevent election violations (Juliani, 2020). Bawaslu, as the election supervisory authority, bears significant responsibility for overseeing and preventing election violations. To fulfill its responsibilities effectively, Bawaslu requires the cooperation and active involvement of the public to assist in monitoring and preventing election violations. Bawaslu must facilitate public participation in monitoring and reporting election violations. Advances in technology and social media are undoubtedly

designed to facilitate public involvement in the election supervision process and provide information regarding elections. This is to ensure the integrity and accuracy of election results while increasing public involvement in the oversight and prevention process at every stage of the election (Early et al., 2023).

Bawaslu uses various tactics in Indonesia, particularly in Southeast Aceh, Aceh Province. Aceh Province, located in western Indonesia, consistently faces complex issues during the elections. Rahmat Bagja, Chair of the 2024 Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), identified various factors contributing to potential violations in the 2024 elections, including the neutrality of civil servants (ASN), the impartiality of village heads, updating voter data, and changes in vote counts. "Therefore, Bawaslu will again formulate specific steps for its 2024 election oversight strategy, specifically the publication of the Election Vulnerability Index (IKP)," he said in West Java. Each regional and provincial Bawaslu uses different strategies to monitor and mitigate election violations. The Southeast Aceh Bawaslu uses social media as a means of outreach, as this platform is widely used by public relations professionals to achieve various goals in effectively monitoring and preventing violations during the 2024 elections.

The Southeast Aceh Regency Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) emphasized that institutions' use of social media can increase transparency and accountability. Institutions can comprehensively explain their programs and gauge public reaction using social media. Furthermore, social media can facilitate constructive interactions between institutions and the public. Lusiana, M.Sc., Commissioner of the Southeast Aceh Regency Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) in 2024, emphasized that social media is a user-centric platform that facilitates collection, sharing, communication, and collaboration. Social media is characterized by networking, information dissemination, archiving capabilities, interaction, social simulation, and user-generated content. Many social media services, including WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and others, are accessible to anyone without restrictions. Social media use is prevalent and widespread among various demographics, including adults, adolescents, and children. The benefits of utilizing social media include improving communication, encouraging socialization, and promoting empowerment (Conway, 1969).

In Southeast Aceh Regency, during the 2024 Election, Bawaslu identified various irregularities through direct observation and reports from local residents, particularly regarding ballot manipulation, in which two legislative candidates were involved in ballot folding. Two DPRK legislative candidates were arrested while sorting and folding ballots for the 2024 election at the Pulus Village Sports Hall, Babusalam District, Southeast Aceh, within the jurisdiction of the Independent Election Commission (KIP). The arrests were based on a report from the Southeast Aceh Regency Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu). Both are legislative candidates representing local and national parties in the 2024 election..

4. CONCLUSION

Public participation in the 2024 Simultaneous Elections requires three elements: willingness, ability, and opportunity. Public participation is a mechanism for mobilizing the public aimed at the interests of the government or state, as well as a means of involving

the public in the formation of government policies, which serve as a component of public oversight of government actions. Therefore, citizen participation is a crucial factor in the success of the 2024 Elections. Public support for the election process is demonstrated through the use of voting rights, as many individuals are not yet aware that their votes will influence the quality of their leaders and representatives for the next five years. In addition, the Election Supervisory Committee (Panwaslih) of Southeast Aceh Regency has received reports of alleged violations in the 2024 Simultaneous Elections in Lawe Aunan Village, Ketambe District, and Lawe Petanduk Village, Semadam District, Southeast Aceh Regency. The Simultaneous Election violations occurred on February 14, 2024 (TribunNews, 2024). The Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) recommended a revote (PSU) in two villages: Lawe Petanduk Village in Semadam District and Lawe Aunan Village in Ketambe District, due to significant violations. Therefore, the Southeast Aceh Regency Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) issued a revote recommendation. The recommendation given by the Southeast Aceh Regency Bawaslu was not without basis, as it was based on various reports from village residents and polling stations (TPS). The revote in Lawe Petanduk Village is scheduled for February 23, 2024, according to Sufli Hadi, Secretary of the Southeast Aceh Regency General Elections Commission (KIP). By fostering effective communication and interaction with the public, Bawaslu can align its vision and mission with public expectations, make informed decisions, and evaluate its programs to increase understanding and engagement between the institution and the public. Second, evaluate the type of social media used. The chosen social media platform must be tailored to the target audience and the relevant sector.

References

- Blais, A. (2010). Political participation. In *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in the 21st Century* (pp. 165–183). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Clinton, J. D., Eubank, N., Fresh, A., & Shepherd, M. E. (2021). Polling place changes and political participation: Evidence from North Carolina presidential elections, 2008–2016. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 9(4), 800–817.
- Conway, M. M. (1969). Political participation in a nonpartisan local election. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 33(3), 425–430.
- Dalton, R. (2011). Youth and participation beyond elections. In R. Dalton (Ed.), *Engaging Youth in Politics*. New York: Open Society Institute.
- Early, A. S., Smith, E. L., & Neupert, S. D. (2023). Age, education, and political involvement differences in daily election-related stress. *Current Psychology*, 42(25), 21341–21350.
- Ekman, J., & Amnå, E. (2012). Political participation and civic engagement: Towards a new typology. *Human Affairs*, 22(3), 283–300.
- Fisher, D. R. (2012). Youth political participation: Bridging activism and electoral politics. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38(1), 119–137.
- Gastil, J., Deess, E. P., & Weiser, P. (2002). Civic awakening in the jury room: A test of the connection between jury deliberation and political participation. *The Journal of Politics*, 64(2), 585–595.
- Meredith, M. (2009). Persistence in political participation. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 4(3), 187–209.

- Omotola, J. S., & Aiyedogbon, G. (2012). Political participation and voter turnout in Nigeria's 2011 elections. *Journal of African Elections*, 11(1), 54–73.
- Santas, T., Asemah, E. S., & Jumbo, C. N. (2020). Mass media and the mobilisation of women for political participation during the 2019 gubernatorial election in Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Communication*, 17(2).
- Towner, T. L. (2013). All political participation is socially networked? New media and the 2012 election. *Social Science Computer Review*, 31(5), 527–541.
- Valentino, N. A., Brader, T., Groenendyk, E. W., Gregorowicz, K., & Hutchings, V. L. (2011). Election night's alright for fighting: The role of emotions in political participation. *The Journal of Politics*, 73(1), 156–170.
- Yang, H. C., & DeHart, J. L. (2016). Social media use and online political participation among college students during the US election 2012. *Social Media + Society*, 2(1), 2056305115623802.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). Designing case studies. *Qualitative Research Methods*, 5(14), 359–386.
- Zvulun, J. Y., & Harel, Y. (2018). Elections as an opportunity of learning civic education and political participation for teenagers. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, 17(2), 136–147.