

The Implementation of Accessibility Standards in Indonesian Tourism Policy: Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Bali's Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

Bali's position as Indonesia's leading international tourism destination makes accessibility an important test of the country's commitment to inclusive tourism. Persons with disabilities may encounter physical, informational, transportation, and institutional barriers that limit their ability to participate equally in tourism activities. This article examines the implementation of accessibility standards in Bali's tourism destinations from a rights-based perspective. Using normative juridical research and policy analysis, the study evaluates disability rights, building accessibility, tourism regulation, transportation standards, and obligations of tourism businesses and local governments. The article argues that formal recognition of disability rights is insufficient without effective implementation and monitoring at the destination level. Accessibility should be incorporated into tourism licensing, destination planning, infrastructure development, and business compliance. The study proposes an inclusive tourism framework requiring universal design, reasonable accommodation, accessible information, staff training, and effective complaint mechanisms. Local governments should also establish measurable accessibility indicators and inspection mechanisms rather than relying solely on voluntary compliance. Treating accessibility as a legal obligation rather than a commercial service would strengthen equal participation in tourism and contribute to a more inclusive model of destination governance. Bali can therefore serve as an important case for evaluating the practical implementation of disability-inclusive tourism policy in Indonesia.

[Posisi Bali sebagai destinasi wisata internasional terkemuka di Indonesia menjadikan aksesibilitas sebagai ujian penting bagi komitmen negara terhadap pariwisata inklusif. Penyandang disabilitas mungkin menghadapi hambatan fisik, informasi, transportasi, dan kelembagaan yang membatasi kemampuan mereka untuk berpartisipasi secara setara dalam kegiatan pariwisata. Artikel ini mengkaji implementasi standar aksesibilitas di destinasi wisata Bali dari perspektif berbasis hak. Dengan menggunakan riset hukum

normatif dan analisis kebijakan, studi ini mengevaluasi hak-hak penyandang disabilitas, aksesibilitas bangunan, regulasi pariwisata, standar transportasi, dan kewajiban bisnis pariwisata serta pemerintah daerah. Artikel ini berpendapat bahwa pengakuan formal atas hak-hak penyandang disabilitas tidak cukup tanpa implementasi dan pemantauan yang efektif di tingkat destinasi. Aksesibilitas harus diintegrasikan ke dalam perizinan pariwisata, perencanaan destinasi, pengembangan infrastruktur, dan kepatuhan bisnis. Studi ini mengusulkan kerangka kerja pariwisata inklusif yang membutuhkan desain universal, akomodasi yang wajar, informasi yang mudah diakses, pelatihan staf, dan mekanisme pengaduan yang efektif. Pemerintah daerah juga harus menetapkan indikator aksesibilitas yang terukur dan mekanisme inspeksi daripada hanya mengandalkan kepatuhan sukarela. Memperlakukan aksesibilitas sebagai kewajiban hukum daripada layanan komersial akan memperkuat partisipasi yang setara dalam pariwisata dan berkontribusi pada model tata kelola destinasi yang lebih inklusif. Oleh karena itu, Bali dapat menjadi studi kasus penting untuk mengevaluasi implementasi praktis kebijakan pariwisata inklusif disabilitas di Indonesia.]

Keywords: Accessible tourism, disability rights, Bali, tourism policy, inclusive tourism

Introduction

Tourism is commonly associated with mobility, leisure, cultural participation, and access to public spaces. For persons with disabilities, however, the ability to enjoy these dimensions of tourism depends substantially on whether destinations are physically, technologically, socially, and institutionally accessible. A destination may possess internationally recognized attractions while remaining effectively inaccessible when visitors encounter stairs without alternative routes, inaccessible toilets, inadequate signage, inaccessible transportation, or information systems that do not accommodate different forms of disability. Accessibility is therefore not merely an issue of convenience or market development. It concerns the practical enjoyment of equality, autonomy, participation, and non-discrimination. International human rights law reinforces this position through the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), particularly Articles 9 and 30, which require States to address accessibility to physical environments, transportation, information, public services, recreational facilities, and tourism venues.

Indonesia has established an important legal foundation for disability inclusion through Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities. The legislation recognizes accessibility as part of the rights of persons with disabilities and imposes responsibilities on governments and other relevant actors. Law No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism also provides a legal basis for tourists with special needs to receive services appropriate to their needs. These provisions are reinforced by building,

transportation, public-service, and accessibility regulations. Nevertheless, the existence of legal norms does not automatically produce accessible destinations. The central regulatory problem is implementation: accessibility standards may be distributed among different sectors without a sufficiently integrated mechanism connecting tourism planning, licensing, construction, transport, information, and monitoring. The result is a regulatory environment in which compliance may be assessed through individual facilities rather than through the accessibility of the entire tourism experience.

Previous studies reveal that this implementation gap is visible across Indonesian destinations. Research in the Malioboro tourism area found that although certain accessibility facilities existed, communication, signage, and horizontal movement remained insufficient for persons with disabilities (Budiatiningsih and Rojabi 2023). Research on Denpasar similarly identifies the importance of government, tourism businesses, communities, and other stakeholders while finding barriers related to data availability, social attitudes, and inter-institutional cooperation (Kesami, Arismayanti, and Sari 2021). Earlier research in South Denpasar also concluded that accessibility provision had not been fully realized among government, community, and tourism-industry stakeholders (Simanjuntak, Dewi, and Dewi 2018). These studies indicate that the problem cannot be reduced to infrastructure deficiency. Accessibility is a governance issue involving coordination, enforcement, knowledge, financing, and institutional accountability.

Research focusing on tourists with disabilities in Indonesia further demonstrates that barriers influence actual tourism experiences and travel behavior. A study examining the voices of persons with disabilities in Indonesia emphasizes the importance of incorporating their experiences into tourism planning rather than designing accessibility solely from institutional assumptions. Research on travel constraints similarly demonstrates that barriers can influence travel intentions, indicating that accessibility failures may reduce actual participation in tourism rather than merely lower visitor satisfaction. More specifically, a 2024 evaluation of Penglipuran Village in Bali found that accessibility remained inadequate in several areas and restricted wheelchair users' ability to explore the destination fully, interact with local residents, and experience tourism activities. These findings are particularly significant for Bali because the island's international tourism position creates an expectation that destination infrastructure should meet globally recognizable standards of inclusion.

This article therefore addresses the implementation dimension of accessible tourism policy. Rather than asking whether Indonesian law recognizes disability rights, it asks whether the existing regulatory architecture converts those rights into measurable obligations at destination level. The article argues that accessibility should be integrated into the entire tourism governance cycle, from spatial planning and licensing to infrastructure design, service delivery, inspection, monitoring, and remedies. Bali provides a particularly important analytical setting because the

island contains diverse tourism environments, including beaches, cultural villages, heritage sites, hotels, restaurants, transportation systems, and public spaces. The article consequently conceptualizes accessibility as a destination-wide regulatory obligation rather than as a collection of isolated facilities.

Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

The first theoretical foundation is the human rights model of disability. Unlike approaches that conceptualize disability primarily as an individual medical condition, the human rights model emphasizes the interaction between impairment and social, institutional, and environmental barriers. From this perspective, an inaccessible tourism destination does not simply create inconvenience for a person with a disability; it creates a structural condition that restricts equal participation. Accessibility is therefore connected to substantive equality because formally identical treatment can produce unequal outcomes when environments are designed without considering human diversity. The CRPD embodies this understanding by requiring States to identify and eliminate accessibility barriers while also requiring accessibility standards for facilities and services open to the public.

The second framework is universal design. Universal design seeks to make environments, products, and services usable by the widest possible range of people without requiring special adaptation whenever possible. Within tourism, this principle is particularly important because accessibility should not be treated as a separate service exclusively directed toward persons with disabilities. Ramps, clear signage, accessible digital information, step-free routes, adequate seating, audible announcements, and accessible toilets can benefit older persons, families with children, people with temporary injuries, and travelers carrying luggage. Universal design therefore connects disability inclusion with destination quality more broadly. However, universal design does not eliminate the need for reasonable accommodation. Some individuals may still require individualized assistance or modifications because a standardized environment cannot accommodate every form of disability.

The third framework concerns inclusive tourism and stakeholder governance. Tourism accessibility depends on multiple actors, including central and local governments, destination managers, transportation providers, accommodation businesses, attraction operators, construction professionals, digital platform providers, and disability organizations. A destination can therefore become inaccessible even where individual actors comply with isolated standards. For example, an accessible hotel may remain difficult to reach if public transportation lacks accessible vehicles or pedestrian routes are obstructed. Studies of Denpasar demonstrate that accessibility provision involves multiple stakeholder categories and that coordination is itself a significant challenge (Kesami, Arismayanti, and Sari 2021). This supports a governance approach in which accessibility is evaluated across the entire tourism chain rather than through individual business compliance.

The fourth framework is rights-based implementation. A rights-based approach distinguishes between voluntary inclusion and enforceable entitlement. When accessibility is treated primarily as a commercial feature, businesses may prioritize facilities that produce visible marketing benefits while neglecting less visible requirements such as accessible information, emergency procedures, staff competence, or complaint systems. A rights-based approach instead requires authorities to establish minimum standards, monitor compliance, provide remedies, and ensure that persons with disabilities participate in policy formulation. This is consistent with the CRPD's requirement that States monitor accessibility standards and ensure that private entities offering facilities and services to the public take accessibility into account.

Methods

This research employs normative juridical analysis combined with policy analysis and a structured review of relevant empirical tourism literature. Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, Law No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism, Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services, Law No. 28 of 2002 on Buildings as amended by subsequent legislation, Government Regulation No. 16 of 2021 on Implementing Regulations of the Building Law, and relevant technical standards concerning accessibility. International legal materials include the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly Articles 9 and 30. These instruments are examined to determine the scope of state obligations, private-sector responsibilities, accessibility standards, and available enforcement mechanisms.

Secondary materials were selected from peer-reviewed journals and scholarly publications concerning accessible tourism, disability rights, tourism governance, destination accessibility, and Indonesian tourism policy. Particular attention was given to empirical studies concerning Bali and other Indonesian destinations because implementation problems cannot be adequately evaluated through legislation alone. The study does not conduct original fieldwork; instead, it synthesizes normative requirements with findings reported in existing research. The analytical method is interpretive and comparative, identifying areas where legal standards, policy design, and observed destination conditions converge or diverge. The analysis subsequently develops an implementation framework designed to connect legal recognition with measurable destination-level obligations.

Results and Discussion

1. Accessibility as a Destination-Wide Legal Obligation

The analysis demonstrates that the principal challenge for accessible tourism in Bali is the fragmentation of accessibility obligations. Indonesian law provides significant protection for persons with disabilities, but relevant requirements are distributed across disability legislation, tourism law, building regulation, transportation regulation, public-service standards, and local governance. This

fragmentation can produce an institutional situation in which each authority considers accessibility to be partly the responsibility of another institution. Tourism authorities may focus on attractions and businesses, construction authorities on buildings, transportation authorities on mobility, and social authorities on disability welfare. From the perspective of a tourist with a disability, however, these institutional boundaries are irrelevant. The tourism experience is continuous. An inaccessible sidewalk can undermine an accessible hotel; an inaccessible transport connection can prevent a visitor from reaching an accessible attraction.

This distinction changes the meaning of compliance. Compliance should not be assessed solely by asking whether a hotel has an accessible room or whether an attraction has installed a ramp. Authorities should evaluate whether a person with a disability can realistically complete the tourism journey from arrival to departure. This includes transportation, pedestrian connections, entrance facilities, ticketing, toilets, accommodation, attractions, restaurants, information, emergency procedures, and complaint channels. The findings from Penglipuran illustrate the importance of this destination-wide perspective. Although some facilities were available, remaining barriers prevented wheelchair users from fully experiencing the village. The problem therefore lies not simply in the absence of individual facilities but in the discontinuity between accessible and inaccessible components.

The destination-wide approach also corresponds with the human rights requirement of accessibility to facilities and services open to the public. Article 9 of the CRPD expressly connects physical environments with transportation, information, communications, and public services. Indonesia's tourism policy should consequently interpret accessibility as a cross-sectoral obligation. Bali's destination management authorities could establish integrated accessibility plans covering priority tourism corridors, attractions, public transport, pedestrian routes, accommodation clusters, and digital information systems. Such planning would be more effective than expecting each individual tourism business to solve accessibility independently.

2. From Minimum Facilities to Universal Design and Reasonable Accommodation

A second finding concerns the distinction between having an accessibility facility and achieving meaningful accessibility. A ramp may technically exist but remain unusable if its slope, surface, width, or connection to surrounding pathways is inadequate. A wheelchair-accessible toilet may exist but be inaccessible because the route to it contains stairs. A destination website may contain information about accessibility but fail to provide screen-reader compatibility. These examples demonstrate that accessibility is functional rather than symbolic. The relevant question is whether a person with a disability can use the facility safely, independently, and with dignity.

Evidence from Indonesian destinations supports this conclusion. The Malioboro study found that several basic accessibility indicators existed while

communication, signage, and horizontal movement remained inadequate (Budiatiningsih and Rojabi 2023). The Penglipuran study similarly found limitations affecting wheelchair users' ability to move throughout the destination. Research concerning Bandung also identifies deficiencies in both physical and non-physical accessibility, demonstrating that accessibility problems extend beyond architectural design. These findings indicate that Indonesian tourism policy should move from a checklist approach toward performance-based accessibility.

Universal design provides one pathway for this transition. Instead of constructing separate facilities for disabled visitors after mainstream infrastructure has been completed, accessibility should be incorporated into initial design decisions. This reduces retrofitting costs and avoids creating segregated tourism experiences. Nevertheless, universal design should be supplemented by reasonable accommodation because individual needs differ. A rights-compatible tourism destination should therefore establish both general accessibility standards and mechanisms for individualized assistance. This may include sign-language interpretation, trained staff, mobility assistance, alternative communication formats, accessible booking arrangements, and individualized support where required. The objective is not identical treatment but equal ability to participate.

3. Accessibility, Tourism Businesses, and Regulatory Compliance

A third finding is that accessibility cannot be achieved through government infrastructure alone. Tourism businesses control many of the spaces and services that determine visitor experience, including hotels, restaurants, attractions, tour operators, travel agencies, and entertainment facilities. The CRPD specifically requires States to ensure that private entities offering facilities and services to the public take accessibility into account. This principle is particularly relevant to Bali because a significant portion of tourism infrastructure is privately operated. A public destination may have accessible roads and sidewalks but remain inaccessible because individual businesses do not provide accessible entrances, rooms, bathrooms, communication systems, or trained personnel.

The regulatory implication is that accessibility should be incorporated into tourism licensing and business compliance rather than left primarily to voluntary corporate responsibility. Licensing authorities could establish minimum accessibility criteria according to business type, location, capacity, and risk. Hotels, for example, could be required to provide accessible rooms and routes, while attractions could be required to demonstrate accessible entrances, visitor pathways, toilets, emergency procedures, and information. Restaurants could be assessed for entrance access, seating, toilets, menus, and staff capacity. These requirements should be proportionate but measurable. The absence of measurable indicators makes enforcement difficult because authorities cannot determine objectively whether a business has met its obligations.

Recent Indonesian research on hospitality services suggests that service providers have an important role in transforming accessibility from infrastructure

into actual visitor experience. The 2025 study of disability-friendly hospitality services emphasizes the role of hospitality providers in empowering inclusive tourism. This is significant because infrastructure alone cannot guarantee inclusion. Staff attitudes, communication, responsiveness, and knowledge can determine whether a person with a disability experiences a destination as welcoming or exclusionary. Accessibility regulation should therefore combine physical standards with service standards, including staff training and procedures for responding to accessibility requests.

4. Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Tourism Governance

A fourth finding concerns who defines accessibility standards. Accessibility policies are frequently designed by governments, planners, architects, engineers, and tourism professionals. Although their technical expertise is essential, it cannot replace the experiential knowledge of persons with disabilities. The experiences of disabled tourists reveal barriers that may not be visible during conventional infrastructure inspections. Research on tourism experiences in Indonesia emphasizes the importance of hearing directly from persons with disabilities when designing tourism products, services, and planning mechanisms. The principle is therefore not merely consultative. Persons with disabilities should participate in determining accessibility priorities, evaluating infrastructure, developing indicators, and monitoring destination performance.

The Denpasar evidence demonstrates why such participation matters. Stakeholder research identified limited disability-related data, community attitudes, and coordination between institutions as barriers to accessibility provision (Kesami, Arismayanti, and Sari 2021). Without reliable information about the actual needs and experiences of disabled tourists, policy-makers may allocate resources based on assumptions. A destination may invest heavily in visible infrastructure while overlooking information accessibility or transport connections. Establishing formal advisory mechanisms involving organizations of persons with disabilities could help correct this imbalance.

Participation should also be incorporated into accessibility audits. Traditional inspection systems generally evaluate whether infrastructure complies with technical specifications. A participatory audit would additionally examine whether facilities are usable in real tourism conditions. This could involve wheelchair users, people with visual impairments, deaf or hard-of-hearing visitors, and people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. Their experiences can complement technical assessments and produce more realistic accessibility indicators. In this respect, participation is not simply a democratic value; it is an instrument for improving regulatory accuracy.

5. Monitoring, Complaints, and Accountability

The final finding concerns enforcement. Accessibility standards have limited practical significance if destinations lack mechanisms for inspection, complaints,

correction, and sanctions. Indonesian tourism policy has historically relied on a combination of governmental regulation and private-sector implementation. Yet accessibility requires continuous monitoring because facilities can deteriorate, businesses can modify layouts, and infrastructure surrounding tourism sites can change. A destination that is accessible at the time of initial certification may become inaccessible several years later.

An effective monitoring system should therefore combine periodic audits with complaint-based supervision. Local governments could develop accessibility indicators covering physical infrastructure, transportation, information, digital services, staff competence, emergency procedures, and customer service. Tourism businesses could be required to demonstrate compliance periodically, while destination managers could publish accessibility information so that tourists can make informed decisions. Complaint mechanisms should be available in accessible formats and should not require complicated legal procedures. Persons with disabilities should be able to report inaccessible facilities, discrimination, or failure to provide reasonable accommodation through online, telephone, in-person, and alternative communication channels.

Accountability should also be proportionate. Minor technical deficiencies may require correction within a specified period, whereas deliberate refusal to provide legally required accessibility or repeated non-compliance may justify stronger administrative measures. This approach avoids treating every deficiency as an enforcement crisis while still ensuring that accessibility has meaningful legal consequences. The central principle is that accessibility must be monitored as an ongoing public obligation rather than treated as a one-time infrastructure project. For Bali, this would provide a more credible mechanism for translating its image as an internationally competitive destination into measurable inclusion.

Conclusion

The implementation of accessibility standards in Bali demonstrates a broader challenge in Indonesian tourism governance: legal recognition does not necessarily produce practical equality. Indonesia has established important legal foundations through disability, tourism, public-service, and building regulations, while international obligations under the CRPD reinforce accessibility as a human rights requirement. Nevertheless, empirical studies indicate that barriers remain across physical infrastructure, transportation, information, communication, service delivery, and institutional coordination. The central regulatory weakness is therefore not simply the absence of standards but the fragmentation of implementation and the limited integration of accessibility into destination-level governance.

Accessibility should consequently be treated as a continuous and enforceable component of tourism policy. Tourism licensing, destination planning, infrastructure procurement, business compliance, transportation planning, and monitoring should incorporate measurable accessibility indicators. Universal

design should guide new development, while reasonable accommodation should address individual needs that cannot be resolved through standardized design. Tourism businesses should be subject to proportionate accessibility obligations, and local governments should conduct periodic audits rather than relying exclusively on voluntary compliance.

Bali can strengthen its position as an international tourism destination by making accessibility part of destination quality rather than treating disability inclusion as a specialized social program. The participation of persons with disabilities should be institutionalized in planning, auditing, and evaluation because lived experience is indispensable to identifying barriers that technical compliance may overlook. Accessible complaint mechanisms and effective enforcement would further ensure that accessibility standards have practical consequences. A rights-based model would ultimately shift Indonesian tourism policy from asking whether a destination possesses accessibility facilities toward the more meaningful question of whether persons with disabilities can independently, safely, and equally participate in the tourism experience.

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