

## ARE MOSQUES FRIENDLY TO VULNERABLE GROUPS?

## SUDAH RAMAHKAH MASJID UNTUK KELOMPOK RENTAN?

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### **Abstract**

*This paper aims to investigate how mosques become friendly worship places for vulnerable people, such as elderly and disabled people. The research is based on studying three mosques: Baiturrahman Mosque in Depok, Bin Baaz Mosque in Makassar, and the Great Mosque in Makassar. To assess how friendly these mosques are to the mentioned vulnerable groups, this study considers the Minister of Public Works Regulation No. 30 of 2006 on Technical Guidelines for Facilities and Accessibility in Buildings and Environment, which sets standard facilities for people with disabilities. This study finds that these mosques are dedicated to providing access to those groups. However, the existing facilities are still insufficient, which is mostly caused by the limited funding they have to provide more supportive facilities.*

**Keywords:** Accessibility; Disability; The Mosque; The Vulnerable group

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana masjid menjadi tempat ibadah yang ramah bagi kelompok rentan, seperti lansia dan penyandang disabilitas. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada studi terhadap tiga masjid, yaitu Masjid Baiturrahman di Depok, Masjid Bin Baaz di Makassar, dan Masjid Raya di Makassar. Untuk menilai seberapa ramah masjid-masjid tersebut terhadap kelompok rentan yang disebutkan di atas, penelitian ini mempertimbangkan Peraturan Menteri Pekerjaan Umum No. 30 Tahun 2006 tentang Pedoman Teknis Fasilitas dan Aksesibilitas pada Bangunan Gedung dan Lingkungan, yang menetapkan standar fasilitas bagi penyandang disabilitas. Studi ini menemukan bahwa masjid-masjid tersebut telah mendedikasikan diri untuk menyediakan akses bagi kelompok tersebut. Namun, fasilitas yang ada masih belum mencukupi, yang sebagian besar disebabkan oleh keterbatasan dana yang mereka miliki untuk menyediakan fasilitas yang lebih mendukung.

**Kata Kunci:** Aksesibilitas; Disabilitas; Masjid; Kelompok Rentan

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## INTRODUCTION

Every human being is entitled to appreciation and respect. Another important aspect is recognizing everyone's strengths and weaknesses (Amalia, 2011, p. 401). Citizen's rights are protected and strived to be fulfilled by the state. The state guarantees its citizen's rights, including those with disabilities.

Regions in Indonesia stipulate development plans concerning persons with disabilities (Sekretariat Negara 2019). This includes recognizing everyone's rights to the state (Culla 1999:30). The state's efforts to fulfil human rights are by formulating legal instruments to protect vulnerable groups. One effort is to ensure the accessibility of public facilities, including buildings. This aligns with the value of social justice, stated in the fifth principle of Pancasila.

The state must fulfil equal services for people with disabilities as one of the vulnerable groups to live and participate in society (Moniaga, 2020, p. 19). Those considered vulnerable groups are people with disabilities, the elderly, the poor, refugees, indigenous peoples, and migrant workers (Suparmiyati et al., 2016: 6). This group often cannot fulfil their basic rights, such as in education, business opportunities, and health rights (Wirawan, 2021, p. 242). However, there have been significant

developments in the state's attention to persons with severe disabilities (Tim Penyusun Laporan Tahunan Komnas HAM 2016, 2016, p. 25). This indicates that the government attempts to be present in this matter. One significant aspect to be considered is the access to worship facilities for disabilities, as adhering to one religion and performing worship is one of human rights.

Indonesia has a unique blend of cultures and pluralism (Digdoyo, 2018, p. 43). Every human has a similar position in any case (Rakhman, 2019, p. 64). Vulnerable groups (disabled and elderly) deserve equal treatment. However, in reality, this is not easy to achieve. Negative views, stereotypes, and injustice are often found in various fields (Nugroho et al., 2012, p. 97). People with disabilities and older people want to live a normal law. They are entitled to rights protection.

Everyone has barriers, but the difference with people with disabilities is that they need assistance to reduce these barriers. For example, non-disabled people will easily do their daily activities, but not those with disabled people. In this case, the state is obliged to provide adequate services for persons with disabilities to live and participate in community life (Moniaga, 2020. 19). The situation often found in someone with a physical limitation is that, sometimes, people are

reluctant to provide help and look at them differently. Furthermore, their limitations make them vulnerable. They are often neglected, from the right to life, learning, work, and access to health care and other universal facilities (Wirawan, 2021: 242).

Accessibility in terms of basic rights is something that the state, society, and related parties must consider. This is in line with the value of social justice as stated in the fifth principle of Pancasila, which is a right that all Indonesian citizens must obtain without exception. This includes vulnerable groups, such as communities with disabilities and the elderly. This group is certainly a group that must get justice in every aspect of their lives. The government's commitment will be in vain if the community does not support these efforts. Inclusivity (equality) for these two groups that are often ignored certainly expects a normal pattern of life like other citizens.

The dimensions of accessibility are used as a measure of equal distribution of access (Permana et al., 2022, p. 49). Accessibility, according to Weisman (1981), is the ease with which individuals access the surrounding environment (Sholahuddin, 2007, p. 32). Some important access includes public facilities and infrastructures, legal services, social protection, and social

assistance (Djamhari et al., 2020, p. 44). The 'accessibility of worship' (accessible congregations) refers to places of worship that are friendly to disabled people (Maftuhin, 2014, p. 250). Public facility services should support them in being independent and secure (Sukamto & Hetyorini, 2013: 9).

The accessible congregation movement is an example of a movement initiated by Muslims in Indonesia to ensure disabled people's right to worship is fulfilled (Chamadi et al., 2020, p. 190). Making mosques accessible is certainly uneasy. However, the commitment is to ensure that the people can come and feel "individualized" when they go to a worship place.

At the end of 2016, it is estimated that the number of persons with disabilities in Indonesia reached 12.15% of the total population, or nearly 30 million people (Wirawan, 2021, p. 241). People with disabilities often experience discrimination in various aspects of daily life (Nugroho et al., 2012, p. 88).

The Quran guarantees the openness of spiritual space for anyone in a mosque. This is because of the vital role of the mosque. The attention to the mosque is contained in surah Al Baqarah verse 114. It states, "Who is more unjust than he who forbids the mosques of Allah to be used for dhikr in them and seeks to tear them down? They are not fit to enter them, except with fear (of Allah)".

Asparina (2018: 261) explains that Sheikh Zuhaili sees this word as obstructing from a legal point of view, or in other words, injustice or interference in (especially) worshipping in the mosque.

This study investigates how mosques can be accessible to disabled people and the sufficiency of the existing facilities. This research is based on a field inquiry in three mosques with access for the disabled. These are Baiturrahim of Beji Timur Depok Mosque, the Bin Baz Makassar Mosque, and the Grand Mosque of Makassar. These mosques are worth observing due to their commitment to being disabled-friendly mosques. Their goal is to apply that the house of Allah applies the principle that the worship places are open to anyone without any exception.

When Baiturrahim mosque was inaugurated, it was declared an elderly-friendly mosque. The management facilitates ramps to enable older people to walk to access the mosque. However, the degree of slope of the ramp is not in accordance with the Regulation of Public Works No. 30 of 2006 concerning Technical Guidelines for Facilities and Accessibility in Buildings and Buildings and the Environment. This is because the ramp outside the building has more than a five-degree slope, which ideally should have only a five-degree slope. Furthermore, Bin Baaz Mosque claims

to be disability-friendly with its ramp facilities. The authors argue this does not align with the Ministry of Public Works standards.

Moreover, there are still various important facilities unavailable in those mosques, such as disabled-friendly toilets and special elevators for disabled people.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative inquiry uses data from observations and interviews with mosque managers. The three mosques chosen are the bin Baaz Mosque, the Grand Mosque in Makassar, and the Baiturrahim Mosque in Beji Depok. These mosques were chosen purposively considering their claims to be disabled and elderly-friendly worship places.

Researchers develop instruments for observations, interviews, and document study. However, these are open instruments with only general guidelines to ensure wide information collection.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Mosque Access for Disabilities and the Elderly

One of the role models of mosques that are 'trying' to be accessible or friendly to people with disabilities but not yet fully is the UIN Sunan Kalijaga mosque. Solider TV YouTube account ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yifff\\_dcQHvY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yifff_dcQHvY)) interviewed the mosque

manager. He stated that this mosque has provided wheelchair access to the main room and the bathroom and ablution space. In addition, there is a sign language translator during the Ju'mat prayer sermon. Another form of hospitality is when the adhan sounds, a sign language interpreter will provide sign language. This mosque cooperates with the Disability Service Centre (PLD) UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. He also mentioned the need for guiding blocks to help the visually impaired access mosque facilities. The mosque is also equipped with ramps and toilet facilities for disabled groups.

In addition, the Syuhada Kotabaru Mosque, studied by Asparina (2018: 272) is another example. This historic mosque provides access to the main room of the mosque. The management has arranged a program to build facilities for the disabled, including the elderly, in the form of a special road to the main room of the mosque, ablution places, toilets, and sign language interpreters.

Those examples indicate changes in perspectives and treatment of people with disabilities. Even though some of the facilities remain inaccessible, the management's attitude towards people with disabilities has been more sensitive. This is shown by the awareness to provide easy access for vulnerable groups.

Islam is concerned about people with disabilities, accepting them as equal to other humans and even prioritizing them. The Prophet Muhammad himself empowered and developed people with disabilities. This is at least the case with Ibn Ummi Maktum, who was blind but was tough and independent and had strong leadership skills. The Prophet Muhammad appointed Ibn Ummi Maktum to represent him as an *imam* in Medina when the Prophet was traveling. Thus, Islam ensures the fulfillment of rights and empowerment of people with disabilities (Lembaga Bahtsul Masail (LBM), 2018).

This research examines the accessibility of Muslim worship facilities. This accessibility is assessed based on the Minister of Public Works Regulation No. 30 of 2006 on Technical Guidelines for Facilities and Accessibility in Buildings and Environment.

The first facility is ramps. Ramps are a circulation part with a special slope for people who cannot use stairs. According to the Minister of Public Works Regulation No. 30 of 2006, the ramps should be no more than 7 degrees. It should not be more than 6 degrees if it is located outside a building. However, this study finds that not all mosques have referred to the specified slope. Most of them make the ramps parallel to the stairs. In other words, the ramps are only an alternative for those who cannot

climb the stairs.

The second is special parking spaces. In three observed mosques, they do not have this kind of facility. A minimum building provision should include a special space for disabled people.

The third is disabled-friendly toilets. Based on the Minister of Public Works Regulation mentioned above, a public facility needs to have toilets that are easily accessible to disabled people. However, this kind of facility remained absent from the three observed mosques.

In Indonesia, the guarantee of equal opportunities and rights for people with disabilities is regulated by Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning People with Disabilities. Article 2 states that the implementation and fulfilment of rights for people with disabilities should be based on respect for dignity, individual autonomy, full participation without discrimination, accessibility, equal opportunities, equality, special protection, and more protection.

Ideally, mosques, as a place to worship, should embody the notion of egalitarianism. This principle will ensure equal access to the mosque facilities. This means that mosques must consider aspects that allow vulnerable groups easy access. The accessibility needs of people with walking aids are greater than those without physical limitations (Zein, 2017). In many cases,

however, mosque managers often pay more attention to the aesthetic elements of a mosque. This is often caused by the limited funds available to build the facilities and the lack of awareness about the standard for special security, comfort, and health requirements (Atmacendana et al., 2016, p. 32). In turn, those factors lead to unfriendly access to mosques for disabled people.

Vulnerability is the degree to which a subject cannot anticipate and adapt to the negative impact of a situation (Bunga & Kiling, 2019, p. 179). The reality shows that, generally, the accessibility of facilities in places of worship, especially mosques, is still far from ideal (Retyaka & Himawanto, 2018, p. 138). This prevents equal access and opportunities for all Muslims to the worship places. Terminologically, equality means everyone is equal in status, norms, morals, and values (Arneson, 2002). Equality in such access is important as mosques should be opened to any Muslim without exception (Aminul, 2020, p. 18), and easy to use facilities properly without being pitied by others (Rahayu, 2018, p. 51). The easy access, in turn, will create independence among disabled people.

Delays in fulfilling access to services for the disabled and elderly potentially lead to neglect and impoverishment (Djamhari et al., 2020, p. 44). The state's role will enable their active social

participation (Moniaga, 2020, p. 19). In some cases, people with physical abnormalities often face insensitivity from others (Wirawan, 2021, p. 242). Their physical limitations make people with disabilities often considered less or not independent, weak, and rely on others' sense of pity.

Regarding equality in places of worship, at least three aspects must be considered: equality in the use of facilities, safe access, and involvement opportunities (Muzayyanah et al., 2020). Those who experience mobility barriers and cannot physically visit the mosque will benefit greatly from the presence of the mosque on social media (Maftuhin, 2019, p. 68). Islam upholds *rahmatan lil 'alamin* principles, providing equal opportunities for its adherents to become pious, regardless of their background (Rakhman, 2019, p. 64). Commonly shared views and understanding regarding the rights of people with disabilities are crucial. This shared view can be used meaningfully (Zainal, 2013, p. 4). The following explains the access provided by three mosques for disabled and senior citizens.

## **Access to the Baiturrahim Mosque**

The Baiturrahim Mosque is in East Beji, Depok City of West Java. The Mayor of Depok, Mohammad Idrisi, inaugurated the mosque with a contemporary and

elderly-friendly concept on December 15, 2019. This mosque carries the slogan of an elderly-friendly mosque designed to be elderly and disabled-friendly.

The mosque was established in 1976 in an area of 700 square meters. In 2014, the mosque was renovated massively (Nurdiansyah, 2019). After this renovation, the mosque is equipped with a health clinic and function room at the basement at the basement. The first and second floors become the main prayer hall. The health clinic collaborates with the Faculty of Health Science of the University of Indonesia. The function or multipurpose room has been used for training, seminars, and others.

However, contacting the mosque management and obtaining information from social media is uneasy, as it has inactive social media. The researchers needed to ask the people surrounding the mosque to be able to meet with the management. This implies that accessing information about the mosque is not easy.

Moreover, there has not been a sign indicating the existence of this mosque, while it is located relatively far from the crowds. Even though the mosque is accessible by cars and motorcycles, public transport to reach the mosque is not available. Moreover, the road to this mosque is not very wide at some points.

The mosque has a relatively large parking lot across from the mosque and

its east side. However, there has been no sign for special parking spaces for disabled people with wheelchairs. Furthermore, there has been no special path for disabled people, but it is not too difficult to be accessed by wheelchair users. The mosque has a ramp to enable them to access various parts of the mosque.



**Figure 1.** Entrance access for disabled people and elderly (Source: Research documentation on June 17 2022)

The dimensions of accessibility are used as a measure of the equity of access (Permana et al., 2022, p. 49). The ramp indicates the mosque's accessibility by disabled and senior citizens, even though it is not in accordance with the government's standard, as it is more than a seven-degree slope. The ramp is equipped with a non-slippery handrail. The ablution room is located below the main prayer hall of the mosque. However, for the ablution areas, people with wheelchairs or blind people need assistance accessing it, as the ramp is too

steep. The north part of the mosque can easily be accessible to disabled people.

In the restroom section, the mosque provides a sink, which makes it difficult for wheelchair users to reach the faucet. Minister of Public Works Regulation No. 30 of 2006 concerning Accessibility Requirements for Buildings and the Environment, restrooms must have several minimum standards for wheelchair users. For example, the door should be at least one meter high and has an emergency button.

Ideally, the faucets must be equipped with motion sensors or operated with rotation. The sink needs to be 78-80 centimetres high. This is intended so that wheelchairs for persons with disabilities can enter. Then, the mirror should be slightly leaning forward.

Regarding access to the main prayer hall, the door is relatively wide to be accessed by a wheelchair. The mosque provides chairs for older adults to pray. Older people can use a wheelchair as a concession for their situation.

The dimension of religious appreciation (experiential) manifests itself in the belief and awareness of the afterlife's goals. Because of this belief, regular worship at an old age is necessary to face the afterlife (Machali & Budiyanto, 2014: 133). Elderly people who have more dominant beliefs or awareness of the afterlife will certainly be better off with supporting facilities.

According to the interviews with Sayuti (Baiturrahim Mosque Management), this mosque used to be visited by many University of Indonesia students, especially from the Faculty of Public Health, who then built a health service clinic. In line with that, the mosque administrators finally carried out renovations, which were completed in 2019. This renovation considered the need to facilitate access for vulnerable people.

In the case of Baiturrahim mosque, the management is sensitive enough to the needs of the senior citizens. The limitations have been mostly caused by limited funds available for the mosque to provide more disabled and elderly people-friendly facilities. Even if there have been weaknesses in optimizing access for disabled and older adults, the existing facilities are relatively sensitive to those people.

### **Access to the Bin Baz Mosque**

The Bin Baz Mosque claims to be a disabled-friendly and child-friendly mosque. This mosque is at Jalan Batu Jajar No. 10, Bukit Baruga Complex, Antang, Makassar City, South Sulawesi 90234. This mosque was built independently by Haji Arif and was inaugurated by the Deputy Governor of South Sulawesi province, Andi Sudirman Sulaiman, on January 4, 2021.

This mosque has three floors with special lanes for the disabled. There is not much information about this mosque besides getting it through its Facebook account at <https://www.facebook.com/masjidbinbazid/> and its Instagram account at <https://www.instagram.com/masjidbinbazid/?hl=id>. With these well-managed social media accounts, people can easily obtain information about the mosque. Nevertheless, their telephone number is relatively difficult to contact. When reaching the mosque's location, people can find a signpost indicating it. It is also accessible by any means of transportation, including public transportation.

In terms of disability-friendly facilities, the mosque does not have a special area for people with disabilities. There has been no sign indicating that. Special routes for blind people have not been available. However, the mosque is equipped with a ramp without supporting handrails.

Access to and from the ablution place is also a concern. Every faucet in the ablution place is equipped with permanent seats for the comfort of the congregations. However, this becomes a problem for wheelchair users as it can be difficult to access the faucet.

As for the main prayer hall, it is easily accessible and wheelchair-friendly, with its flat surface. The mosque does not

provide special seats for worshipers with difficulty standing on the floor. There are no special seats for worshipers who are unable to stand. However, the management provides special sitting aids. The area for sermons is also less friendly for preachers with wheelchairs. To access the sermon podium, someone using wheelchairs needs help.

### **Access to the Grand Mosque of Makassar**

Detiknews.com, a notable mainstream online media, reported that the Grand Mosque of Makassar was designed by Muhammad Soebardjo, who won a design competition held by the Raya Mosque construction committee (Mappiwali, 2021). Grand Mosque of Makassar was founded in 1949; renovations began in 1998 and were completed in September 1999. The architects of the Grand Mosque of Makassar were Danny Pomanto, Furqan Affandi, and Fajar. The building of this mosque was inspired by Middle Eastern and Spanish architecture (Jaharuddin et al., 2019, p. 42).

On social media, several names indicate the Grand Mosque of Makassar. One of them is <https://www.instagram.com/masjidrayaMKS/>. It is still unclear which one is the exact account of the mosque. As a result, obtaining information about this mosque is rather difficult.

It is a grand mosque in the big city of

Makassar and is easily accessible. A signpost indicating the mosque's location can be seen from the main road. The mosque is located near the Makassar market, called Makassar Central Markert. Furthermore, almost all public transport, called pete-pete, to important routes pass on the main road beside the Grand Mosque.

The Grand Mosque Makassar has a wide entrance leading to a large parking area at the back and side of the mosque. The parking lot provided is relatively adequate to accommodate the visitors. However, the parking area is intended for the public in general. There is no special space for people with disabilities. The parking area has a flat surface, making wheelchairs easy to pass. Besides, the parking lot is closely located to the main building. It can be concluded that the parking area has met the standardized distance determined by the Minister of Public Works regulation. The distance should be about 10 meters from the main building and pedestrian path, and the parking area should be on higher ground. With this, the space allows a wheelchair to pass easily. The mosque also has areas intended to take and drop passengers, including people with disabilities.

The front area of the mosque can be reached after climbing stairs. The ablution places, toilets, and bathroom are right beside the topmost of the stairs.

The main prayer is at the top of the mosque.

Uphill road access is also for people in wheelchairs, disabled, and seniors. The road has a fairly large slope, exceeding the 6 and 7 degrees standard. Interviews with mosque administrators revealed that 3-4 people are needed to help push wheelchairs up to the top of the mosque.

The Grand Mosque of Makassar ramp has a non-slippery floor surface with a 115 cm width and is equipped with handrails and a width of 115 cm. This aligns with the stipulated rules. However, the handrail seems to be intended for adults, with a height of around 70 cm. The ramp is diverged and can only be accessed from the front and the side of the parking lot. The end of the ramp is quite flat.

The toilets consist of sitting toilets and squat toilets. On the other hand, the ablution places are designed with two models, with or without seats. They are relatively clean and have smooth-flowing water. The bathroom uses an overhead shower. The toilet seat height meets the standard, which is around 50 cm.

However, no sights or symbols indicate accessible toilets for disabled or elderly people. The toilets are not equipped with handrails to allow disabled people to use them.

Ideally, the sink used in the restroom

should be standardized. For example, the sink's surface and width should also meet the standard by providing more space for easy movement for those with wheelchairs. Furthermore, accessible public restrooms or toilets must have signs or symbols of "persons with disabilities" in embossed print. Public restrooms should have sufficient entrance space for a wheelchair to move. The height of the toilet seats must match the height of common wheelchairs by about 45-50 cm. Moreover, the public restrooms or toilets must be equipped with handrails with a position and height adjusted for wheelchair users and other persons with disabilities.

However, the ablution areas at the Grand Mosque of Makassar are not textured and can be categorized as slippery. The sink location is rather difficult to reach for those with physical limitations.

The main prayer areas of the Grand Mosque of Makassar are located on the first and second floors. One can use the outer stairs at the front or inside the mosque to get to the second floor from the ablution place. People with disabilities can only reach the upper floors using the ramp. However, to get to the main prayer hall, one still should pass several stairs, which is relatively difficult for wheelchair users and senior citizens.

There is no special row or *saf* for the

elderly and disabled people. Even so, the mosque has prepared chairs for visitors with difficulty standing.

There are two types of sermon podiums at the front of the prayer area: higher and lower. The lower one consists of a seat accessible to users. However, there are no facilities provided for preachers with wheelchairs. The sermon material is delivered with an adequate audio system, but no media displays text or sign language.

Based on the results of interviews with mosque administrators, Muhammad Syahril explained that few mosques in Makassar provide special facilities for people with disabilities. Makassar Grand Mosque is one of the few mosques in Makassar that provides special access roads for people with disabilities. This access includes several wheelchair ramps that can be found starting from the parking lot.

Unfortunately, the facilities provided by the Makassar Grand Mosque are limited to providing ramps for wheelchairs as well as chairs that can be used for prayer by the elderly and people with disabilities. The Grand Mosque of Makassar has not provided any facilities to make it easier for the blind and deaf to pray, such as complete instructions or signs using Braille.

In general, the mosque has not provided special guiding blocks intended for those with vision disabilities, including in the

pedestrian paths, roads to the mosque, parking areas, the gate, and inside the mosque. Rahayu (2018) explained that research conducted at the Great Mosque found facilities that are easily accessible to the elderly and people with disabilities when viewed from the place of ablution, toilets, and bathrooms.

### **Building Mosques for Vulnerable People**

In building access for vulnerable groups, a mosque needs to consider a ramp or replacement for stairs to the main room. The ramp must meet predetermined specifications. This ramp is complementary to the stairs in the mosque building. Then, the sidewalk to the mosque must also have an S portal. This is made of iron to protect wheelchair users and is usually located at the end of the sidewalk. Next is the guiding block. This tile guide path is usually yellow with straight lines, with several round textured parts at the end.

It is no less important that access to the mosque must also be facilitated. For example, the arrangement of public spaces and public transportation should also be feasible. One form of eligibility is the aid to get on and off the means of transportation to the mosque. Equally important is whether the mosque has a priority elevator for vulnerable groups.

Moreover, the mosque needs to disseminate information in audio or video that is easily accessible to

vulnerable groups. The management must provide special service information and braille buttons for blind people. Mosques must also have trained personnel ready to serve vulnerable groups.

According to Hamid (2020:193), who researched the accessibility of the Great Mosque of West Sumatra, inclusive public services should have three aspects: togetherness, diversity, and avoiding labeling. Nowadays, this issue of equality is certainly a common concern. The claim of a friendly mosque will certainly make the mosque inclusive.

The expected inclusiveness and supporting facilities and infrastructures also require commitment from the mosque management. The accessibility of the worship places is not only limited to their physical features but also non-physical supports. These can be programs involving vulnerable groups to make them feel accepted.

This also aligns with Naamy's (2023) research conducted in Lombok. It was found that out of a hundred houses of worship, such as mosques, temples, monasteries, and churches, most of them have not been inclusive in responding to disability groups.

When compared to Malaysia (Rusli, Azree, and Mydin, 2018), there are positive developments in terms of public awareness regarding access and

facilities for people with disabilities. However, not all Malaysians have a good understanding of the universal mosque design theory standards for places of worship for people with disabilities.

On the other hand, the research by Utaberta, Niya, and Sabil (2017) emphasized the inaccessibility of mosque buildings in Malaysia and the incompleteness of available guidelines and standards. In addition, the results of this study are consistent with previous studies that stated the low level of accessibility in Malaysian public buildings.

Another study by Tariah et al. (2018) explored wheelchair accessibility in mosques in Riyadh from the perspective of wheelchair users and other disabled groups. The research found that the mosques have been inaccessible to wheelchair users. The current situation forces wheelchair users to worship at their own homes, preventing them from participating in religious rituals. Although laws mandating the accessibility of public places for wheelchair users have been enacted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), they have yet to make a substantial contribution.

This aligns with Iman's research (2023) that mosques in Tambang District, Kampar Regency, are still not maximized in access to facilities such as ramps, ablution places, and special

toilets for people with disabilities. In addition, other studies also found that the lack of coordination between local government work units, related agencies, mosque councils, and the community have prevented the fulfilment of the rights of people with disabilities (Kebijakan et al., 2021; Yasin, 2021). This is similar to the findings in this study that the mosque managers need to optimize access for vulnerable groups.

The state is responsible for protecting the rights of the vulnerable groups. One of the ways is by encouraging the involvement of the elements of society to enhance access for those groups (Ndaumanu, 2020, p. 132).

Islamic teachings are friendly to elderly and disabled people. This can be found in the Prophet Muhammad's tradition, as narrated by Abu Hurairah. The Prophet PBUH was visited by a blind man who said: "O Messenger of Allah, I do not have someone guiding me to the mosque." This blind man asked the Prophet to grant him a concession for praying at his house and not going to the mosque for prayer. However, when the man turned around, the Prophet said, "Do you hear the call to prayer?" The blind man said: "Yes. The Prophet continued, 'Then, answer the call to prayer.' (Muslim, no. 503). This Prophet's tradition becomes a basic reason for the importance of

congregation prayer in the mosque. As a consequence, the mosque needs to facilitate access to all people, including those with disabilities.

Abī Mas'ūd narrates another hadith. He reported a man who complained to Prophet PBUH, "I was late for the Fajr prayer in the congregation led by an *imam* with a very long recitation." Then, the Prophet became angry, and I have never seen the Prophet so angry. The Prophet said, "There are those among you who are a group of people (who are different). So whoever is the *imam*, then shorten (the recitation). Verily, among the congregations are the weak, the elderly, and those with (special) needs" (HR. Al-Bukhāri & Muslim).

Ideally, a mosque, as a place of worship, should be accessible to all Muslims. Those accessing the worship places include disabled people (Maftuhin, 2016). Furthermore, Islam is also very friendly to people with disabilities. Islam teaches social equality between people with and without disabilities. They must be treated equally and accepted sincerely, without discrimination or negative stigma in social life. Surah An-Nur verse 61 mentions: There is no hindrance for the visually impaired, nor for the physically disabled, nor the sick, nor yourselves, to eat (with them) in your own homes or the homes of your fathers.

## **CONCLUSION**

In short, even though the three mosques used in this study, Baiturrahim Mosque, Bin Baaz Mosque, and the Grand Mosque of Makassar, claim to be disabled, elderly, and child-friendly mosques, the facilities they provided are not sufficient for these vulnerable groups. Using the indicators of friendly building stipulated in Minister of Public Works Regulation No. 30 of 2006, some facilities have not followed the standard. Among these facilities are toilets, ramps, and parking areas. One of the causes of this insufficiency is the limited funding the mosques have to maximize their efforts in providing easy access for vulnerable people.

Based on this research, further research studying worship places for vulnerable groups is recommended. It is not only for people with wheelchairs but also other disadvantages. This implies that the attention is not only to building facilities but also to other kinds of support. For example, the UIN Sunan Kalijaga mosque provides sign language interpreters for people with hearing impairments.

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