

# National Tourism Policy: Strengthening Inclusivity for The PWDs

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# **MASA POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

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## **POLICY BRIEF 05**

### **National Tourism Policy: Strengthening Inclusivity for The PWDs**

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2022

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## PREFACE

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Institut Masa Depan Malaysia (MASA) is an independent think tank that brings together experts in government and academia to provide quality research, policy recommendations, and analysis on the full range of public policy issues guided by the shared prosperity values.

Since its inception, MASA has been actively involved in shaping national policies and frameworks. MASA Policy Development Programme (MPDP) was introduced as a pioneering initiative aimed at promoting policy research among researchers from public and private universities across the country, in alignment with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, which are integrated with the 12th Malaysia Plan.

Through the MPDP 1.0 initiative, 30 Policy Briefs have been successfully produced, encompassing policy input and recommendations across sectors such as economics, social issues, education, and sustainable development.

MASA expresses its gratitude to Ms. Kalai Vani Kalimuthu and her team for the production of this policy brief. The commitment of the MPDP grant recipients, along with close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, is highly appreciated and is hoped to continue making a positive impact on national policy development.

**Azril Mohd Amin**

Chief Executive Officer

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## ABOUT MASA

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Institut Masa Depan Malaysia (MASA) is an independent think tank that brings together experts in government and academia to provide quality research, policy recommendations, and analysis on the full range of public policy issues guided by the shared prosperity values.

MASA was established in January 2019. The formation of the organisation was inspired and mandated by the Seventh Prime Minister, YABhg. Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Eighth Prime Minister, YB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Bin Haji Md Yassin. It was founded out of a passion to forward the philosophy of shared prosperity in Malaysia and this region.

MASA also was commissioned by the government of Malaysia to author and develop the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 plan as the new socioeconomic plan for Malaysia.

### Our Vision

To be a thought leader on policy ideas and analysis guided by shared prosperity values.

### Our Mission

To create a world where no one is left behind by influencing policymakers to develop data-driven policies that ensure equitable wealth distribution and continuous improvement of people's well-being.

## ABOUT MPDP

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MASA Policy Development Programme (MPDP) is a pioneering effort in promoting policy research that has become part of MASA's flagship project, in line with the 12th Malaysia Plan which is aligned with the Shared Prosperity Vision and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The research grant, introduced for the first time in 2021, received an encouraging response public and private institutions of higher learning as well as non-governmental organizations.

MPDP researchers have produced studies across various strategic areas, including multidimensional poverty, education for the B40 group, sustainable urban planning for low-income communities, regional inclusivity in Sabah and Sarawak, social enterprise models for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), green economy potential and food security.

Other strategic areas of studies include empowerment of the ecotourism sector, climate change, health preparedness and crisis resilience, addressing learning loss, business acceleration, affordable housing and social protection.

All these are reflections of the initiatives and aspirations, inspired by the 8th Prime Minister and Chairman of MASA, Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin bin Hj. Md. Yassin.

## LIST OF MPDP 1.0 POLICY BRIEFS

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NO	TITLE	PROJECT LEADER
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## **BIOGRAPHY**

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### **KALAI VANI KALIMUTHU**

Kalai Vani Kalimuthu is an accomplished economist who earned a Bachelor of Economics (Hons.) in 2009 and a Master of Economics in 2011 from Universiti Utara Malaysia. Throughout her academic journey, Kalai Vani Kalimuthu has made significant research contributions. She has authored papers on various topics, including econometrics, university life happiness, the impact of natural disasters on economic growth, and leadership satisfaction among school teachers. Her work has been published in prestigious journals and presented at international conferences.

### **VIKNISWARI VIJA KUMARAN**

Vikniswari Vija Kumaran holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Economics from the University Utara Malaysia. She has extensive involvement in various internal and external positions, such as Chairperson of the Research Centre for Economic Studies (CES) at UTAR and Editorial Board Member for the International Journal of Business Society (IJBS). Her research interests include industrial efficiency, environmental economics, development economics, energy economics, and digitalization. Additionally, she has supervised PhD and master's students and has actively participated in community engagement activities.

## **MUHAMMAD BAQIR ABDULLAH**

Muhammad Baqir, an experienced researcher, has dedicated seven years of his career to working at Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS). He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), with a specialization in analyzing the impact of government expenditure on labor structure and skill-based salaries across various economic sectors using input-output decomposition analysis. Recently, he has successfully completed two industrial research grants, one focused on the surveillance and assessment of public expenditure in Kedah State and the other on the contribution of people with disabilities (PWDs) to the sustainability of the tourism sectors in Malaysia.

## **THURAI MURUGAN NATHAN**

Thurai Murugan Nathan is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Environmental Economics at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. He holds an MSc in International Economics and a Bachelors's degree in Economics from University Malaysia Sarawak. He has research experience and has worked on funded projects related to the role of people with disabilities in the sustainability of tourism sectors in Malaysia. He has published papers, presented at conferences, and received awards for his research and presentations. He is also proficient in various software applications and has strong interpersonal and communication skills.

## **MARINI MD ISA**

Marini Md Isa holds a Master's degree in Public Administration and a Bachelor's degree in Foodservice Management. She has a strong academic background and has worked in various positions at Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, including lecturer, deputy dean, and dean. She also has experience as an academic manager and lecturer at Advanced Tourism International College and Olympia College. She has participated in numerous workshops, webinars, and courses related to curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and quality assurance.

## Executive Summary

Statistics show that tourism and travel boost the economy. Malaysian tourist destinations reopened in October 2021. Unlike other visitors, people with disabilities (PWDs) have low tourism rates. Accessibility is the biggest challenge for PWD travellers, according to the United Nations (UN).

Thus, it is important to combine wants and situations that motivate individuals to behave in ways they feel will benefit them. These criteria are important since PWDs' travel experiences differ from non-disabled travellers.

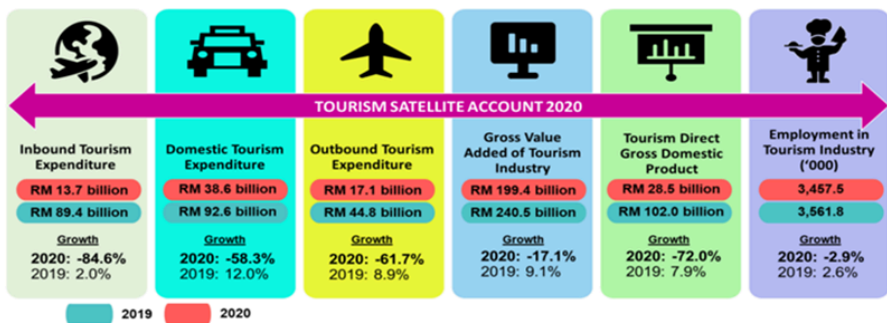
This research investigates the difficulties faced by PWDs in Malaysia and recommends the best long-term approach to achieve equality in the Malaysian tourism industry. This research will also examine if PWD tourism policies encourage tourism.

## Introduction and Problem Statement

Tourism contributed 15.9% of the gross domestic product (GDP), RM240.2 billion, in 2019 and provided 27.9% of the service sector. However, travel restrictions in January 2020 to curb COVID-19 have hurt Malaysia’s tourism.

The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) reported 2020 tourist revenues of RM52.4 billion, down 71.2 percent from 2019. Figure 1 compares the 2019 to 2020 Malaysian tourism industry performance.

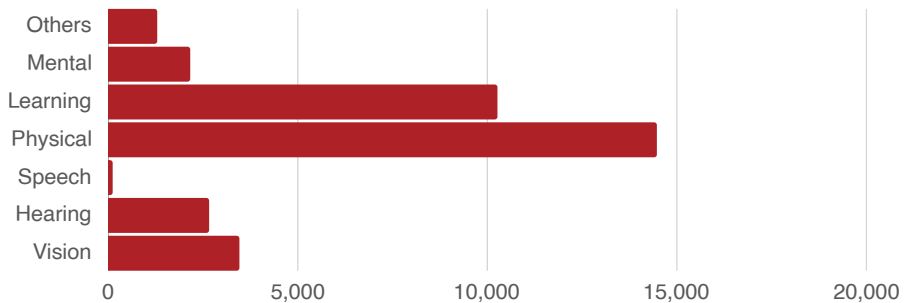
**Figure 1**  
*Malaysia’s Tourism Industry Performance (2020)*



Based on a World Bank report, 15% of people worldwide are estimated to have at least one disability (McClain-Nhlapo et al., 2018). As of January 2021, 34,437 people from Penang and 592,856 people with disabilities are in Malaysia (Department of Social Welfare, 2021) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

*Number of People in Penang with Types of Disability*



PWDs are severely impacted during the pandemic crisis (De Pascale et al., 2022). Thus, to recover from the pandemic, tourism sites should promote an accessible and competitive offer (UNWTO, 2020).

This study highlights the role of PWDs tourists as a potential source of new income in the tourism sector that can increase the arrival of tourists in Malaysia. It provides new job opportunities and revenue for the government.

Knowing their needs and believing the destinations will meet them makes tourists more willing to visit. PWDs lose interest in travel as hurdles rise.

Accessibility is the biggest challenge for PWD travellers, according to the UN (2003). Tourism destinations for PWDs are affected by access, lodging, and transportation issues.

Allan (2013) found that disabled people choose historical and cultural activities, then eco and natural activities. According to Astro Awani (2018), one of the PWDs, known as Zul Affandy Zainol Abidin, believes that 70% of Malaysia's tourism sites are not accessible.

The handicapped market has an excellent opportunity to become a significant source of income for the tourist sector. The increased travel by tourists with disabilities and others can indirectly create more employment opportunities and produce billions of ringgit in revenue for the global tourism sector.

## Critique of Current Policy Option

### (1) Action Plan PWDs (2016 to 2022)

Action Plan PWDs 2016 to 2022 was released to continue the programme and meet PWDs' requirements. Ten strategies comprise this policy. These include improving PWD accessibility in the convention of PWD rights.

This policy shows how the Malaysian government implemented and took action for PWDs to uphold their rights and give them a better chance at social inclusion and full participation in the built environment. They have equal rights and opportunities.

PWDs faced several health challenges whilst studying. Research shows PWDs suffer environmental, economic, and informational tourism challenges. Thus, policymakers must prioritise leisure and pleasure for PWDs but it lacks recreational facilities.

The strategy must emphasise leisure and enjoyment because PWDs want to travel like others (Yau et al. 2004). Since the facilities aren't helpful, PWDs can't spend their money on leisure and enjoyment. Unfortunately, lack of facilities, transportation, and service provider prejudice will discourage PWD tourism.

In addition, Goal 11 of the 2030 Plan, which incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015), is to make cities inclusive, but universal design for accessibility is still not enough for PWDs. There is still no specific action plan policy in Malaysia for disabled people related to access to tourist areas.

## (2) National Tourism Policy

Creating special tourism zones is purposely to attract private and government investment and empower the PWDs' tourism sector.

But, the National Tourism Policy in 1991 and the Second National Tourism Policy (SNTP) aim to have an international infrastructure and tourism product (Langkawi Municipal Council, 2005) to transform from Malaysia's 'low yield tourism' to 'high yield' with several strategies.

However, the arrival of PWDs tourists is still low. The National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2020-2030 was introduced to stabilise the tourist sector to boost Malaysia's tourist sector to ensure sustainability, competitiveness, and inclusivity, including for PWDs.

However, this policy focuses on tourism, where the policy focuses on all the people, including PWDs. Although the government must ensure that all the people are treated equally, but the facilities provided are insufficient to be used by the increasing number of PWDs.

For the upcoming years, the government has to focus on the PWDs' facility for tourism and highlight Malaysia as a PWDs friendly tourism.

This is in line with the "Implementing The 2030 Development Agenda for All Persons with Disabilities: Leaving No One Behind" to provide persons with disabilities with a more conducive and friendly environment for active, productive, and independent living.

Some people will be born as PWDs, and some will become PWDs because of many factors like an accident, aging, and health problems.

When there is an increase in the number of PWDs, the facilities that are provided for them also must increase. Therefore, the government must have a specific focus on PWDs in the tourism policy. In this policy, special interest tourism was highlighted under product augmentation strategies.

The government is in the process of creating unique interest products that can provide exceptional tourist experiences. The policy must include more products for PWDs tourists to have exceptional experiences. PWDs are a new opportunity to empower the tourist industry.

However, facilities are inadequate for the growing number of PWDs. The industry must reinvent itself to be competitive.

Based on the findings above, the tourism industry in Malaysia lacks facilities and the maintenance of the existing facilities for PWDs.



Investigate the barriers PWDs encounter.



Suggest the best strategy to promote equality in the Malaysian tourism sector.



Revisit existing tourism policies that are effective in promoting tourism among PWDs.

## Results and Discussion

### (A) Effectiveness of the existing policies in promoting tourism among the PWDs

#### (1) Identify the primary objective the current tourism would like to achieve for PWDs

The new standards of tourism development are moving towards critical issues such as accessibility. It follows that the tourism industry has been paying more attention to the needs and requests of tourists with disabilities, recognising that those people have the exact needs and desires for tourism as others. UNWTO also states that accessibility is a crucial area of UNWTO's work in sustainable tourism development.

The main goal can be identified when we focus on increasing the PWDs travel demand and understanding the market demand of PWDs tourists by putting them as one of the main points in developing a tourism strategy.

Due to the lack of focus on accessibility tourism in the National Tourism Plan, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) suggests that our Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture investigate and improve the National Tourism Plan by focusing on accessibility tourism to meet the unique needs of tourism and redefine the concept of PWDs tourism again.

## (2) Promotion Strategy that Fits the PWDs

The second solution suggested identifying whether our Promoting strategy in existing policies supports tourism among PWDs. It will help create exceptional business opportunities and a human rights imperative. It is because PWDs friendly tourism does not only benefit persons with disabilities but benefits all.

Promotion will play a significant factor in increasing demand for tourism, especially for PWDs. FGD suggested a promotion strategy that fits the PWDs by increasing the promotion of PWDs tourism, such as organising a Paralympics event. The 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing are a prime example of how the Games can affect society.

The event changed China's approach and attitude towards disability, making society more inclusive for the estimated 83 million people living with an impairment. Winning the right to host the 2008 Games triggered the Chinese government's action to improve the lives of people with disabilities and protect their rights as equal members of society.

New legislation on accessibility was passed. In the seven years following the Games, China spent over \$150 million, equivalent to the last 20 years' investment in accessible infrastructure, making 14,000 facilities accessible nationwide.

We also should be promoting our tourism for PWDs by creating videos and advertisements and conducting special promotions or events for tourists with disabilities.

The event with the theme “Accessible Tourism Promotes National Development” is jointly organised by Beautiful Gate Foundation for The Disabled, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Malaysia, Disabled People International Asia Pacific, and 14 disabilities-related organisations as a pro-event for International Conference on Accessible Tourism 2013 (Pro-ICAT 2013). It had conveyed message on changing perception of providing disabled friendly facilities from “extra cost” to “investment successfully”.

It also raised awareness of the importance of Accessible Tourism and is believed to have a tremendous impact on Malaysian tourism and disabled-friendly facilities soon.

The event’s objective is to encourage the Ministry of Tourism in Malaysia to research promoting Accessible Tourism and to change the perception of providing disabled-friendly facilities from “extra cost” to “investment”.

Besides that, our ministry should also develop or appoint a PWDs ambassador to promote tourism among PWDs. FGD suggested that Ras Adiba Radzi, who currently represents the PWD community in Dewan Negara, said it was every party’s responsibility, including the media, to publicise the provision of PWD-friendly facilities and amenities.

PWDs may refer to the hotel and arrange for a deal and special needs. The deal believes it will encourage PWDs to travel. A part of that promotion strategy that fits PWDs is pricing promotions, i.e., discounts on transportation and accommodation.

### **(3) Role and Responsibility in Promoting the PWDs tourism**

Society should not be divided between able and disabled people. People will enjoy tourism activities when all the parties play their responsibility. FGD may conclude that collaboration between the government agency and the private sector may strengthen the push and pull factor of PWDs to travel.

It will lead to providing essential and practical information on disabled-friendly facilities in public places according to categories, including Tourist attractions, shopping malls, leisure places, transportation, facilities, education centre & government agency, and develop a platform for PWDs to share their tour experiences to encourage others to have the confidence to go for tours.

During the discussion, there were issues raised by the PWDs association, such as more attention from City Council to the cycling activity compared to improvement to public facilities specialised for PWDs' needs. For example, the pathway for PWDs in tourism attention in Penang City nowadays is misused by hawkers without any action from the council.

It will discourage PWDs from travelling or make it inconvenient for senior citizens to travel. A part of that collaboration from the government through the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development may offer open discussion with the PWDs association available in Malaysia.

Malaysia has many non-profit or government organisations that provide services for people with disabilities. FGD also realises that the private sector is vital in encouraging PWDs to travel. Cooperation with the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) will give new light on the PWDs to look more at tourism. MATTA may cooperate with the PWDs association to design travel packages based on their needs and wants.

#### (4) Revisit the policy to ensure it meets the needs of PWDs tourist

Introducing the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 has recognised the right of PWDs in Malaysia. This act came into force on 7 July 2008. This law has given a new chapter to people with disabilities when this act recognises the concept of “right-based”.

The right-based have been clearly stated in the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008, but how about National Tourism Policy 2020-2030? How should we promote tourism for PWDs while the National Tourism Policy 2020-2030 did not support enough PWDs?

The policy focuses more on increasing the tourism sector since it was severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic—the policy focuses on the diversity of tourism products to attract the inflow of tourism. PWDs friendly tourism will be a new product that can attract tourists. Both owners of the above policy may brainstorm new opinions and suggestions to improve the policy, for example, by creating and promoting accessible tourism.

Accessible tourism offers a unique opportunity for segmentation that merges the access requirements of the disability markets. Besides providing information and presenting advertising, and marketing easy tourism facilities, Accessible Tourism can also provide tourist destinations with a more significant competitive advantage for attracting these growing niche markets.

Further, identifying new opinions and enforcing the current rules or policies on the welfare of PWDs should also be monitored. Illegal parking on the PWDs in tourist attractions or shopping complexes is one example of enforcement by the proper authorities.

The authoritarian also suggested adding more budget to help service providers such as hotels and homestays to improve their facilities to accommodate the need of PWDs. The brainstorming should also include PWDs conditions in future policy and enforcement by reviewing the plan or policy and introducing new rules and guidelines for upcoming tourism attractions or providers.

This brainstorming will encourage a tourism system in Malaysia that welcomes PWDs by bridging a good liaison between disabled organisations and tourism organisations so that attractions can be facilitated more systematically.

This cooperation from all the parties, mainly the private, will encourage the Ministry of Tourism in Malaysia to do more research on promoting Accessible Tourism and might change the perception of providing disabled-friendly facilities from “extra cost” to “investment”.

As we play our roles, we will soon see a tremendous impact on Malaysian tourism and disabled-friendly facilities.

## **(B) Main barriers faced by PWDs in terms of participation in tourism activity**

### **(1) Low accessibility in travelling for PWDs**

Low accessibility in tourism destinations for PWDs is the main barrier faced by PWDs during travelling. Sanmargaraja & Wee (2014) shows that an increase in the number of PWDs tourists generated a demand for special facilities for PWDs, and most facilities provided are not disabled-friendly.

For instance, if a person with a disability wants to travel, the first consideration will be whether they can get the proper facilities in the place that they want to travel to.

This consideration is significant for them since their life will become tough without the appropriate accessibility and facilities, resulting in a disastrous tourism experience. Accordingly, outcomes of FGD indicate that low accessibility is one of the main barriers for PWDs travelling in Malaysia.

Thus, low accessibility in travelling among PWDs can be divided into two, i.e., low walkability level and additional effort from PWDs to travel. Outcomes of the study indicate that low walkability levels or facilities make the PWDs challenging to travel. For instance, only certain areas/places are suitable for PWDs to visit due to insufficient facilities, such as the connection of one area to others being inadequate and crowded, and walkways and streets being used for other activities, such as setting up stalls and motorbike parking.

The insufficient connection between one area and another in the tourist spots creates difficulties for the PWDs, who can only visit certain places. It is especially when the tourist spots have level or involve heights.

In addition, PWDs are also trying to avoid crowded and congested areas. Facilities such as bus/ Light rail transit (LRT) and walkways are available.

However, those facilities are not PWDs friendly. Due to this situation, PWDs preferred to stay in the car while travelling or visiting. Furthermore, the walkway is provided for the safety of the walkers beside the streets.

However, using the walkway for different purposes, such as setting up the stalls and bike parking, risks people's life, especially the PWDs. Due to the limited accessibility for PWDs, they are forced to make extra efforts to travel. Since travelling is costly, as listed previously, PWDs preferred to travel in groups which is a good practice.

However, this situation costs them extra expenses since PWDs have to prepare/book the hydraulic bus, which could facilitate travelling. Still, another barrier to the hydraulic bus is the cost of service, which is relatively expensive compared to ordinary travelling buses.

At the same time, communication problems have been highlighted as barriers since PWDs need different treatments based on individual disabilities.

In this case, they should have helpers to facilitate travelling and visiting. All these efforts may cost them higher expenses compared to regular travellers.

## **(2) Lack of Knowledge and Civilisation among Malaysians**

Malaysians should also play their role in understanding the PWDs' limitations and barriers in travelling and visiting. FGD findings indicated that Malaysians lack knowledge and civilisation in understanding the struggles of PWDs in all aspects.

Ignorance and misused of the PWDs' facilities may lead to difficulties for the PWDs in travelling. Based on the FGD, the lack of knowledge and civilisation is divided into three categories.

The first factor is insufficient knowledge from the private sector. Most tourism agencies are private entities. Those agencies need to know the significant role of PWDs in the tourism industry. Thus, providing the proper service and tourism packages to PWDs may enhance the PWDs' participation in tourism.

However, this seems to be limited in Malaysia's private sectors, whereby those agencies focus on average travellers and spend limited time reviewing the feedback from the PWDs' perspective.

The second factor is the low level of civilisation among Malaysians toward understanding the PWDs' struggles. Some standard facilities have been provided to the PWDs, such as particular parking lots and washrooms for PWDs in most government and private entities and public places.

Thus, this is a reasonable effort from the government and private to take care of the welfare of PWDs in Malaysia. However, certain citizens have misused the facilities for their benefit.

For instance, they are parking their car in the PWDs parking lot due to the unavailability of parking or are afraid of walking long distances. This kind of behaviour leads to difficulties for PWDs to travel.

Thus, citizens should understand that PWDs cannot walk far or use ordinary people's washrooms.

Lastly, from the perspective of authorised parties/persons, FGD outcomes indicate that authorities lack awareness of the difficulty faced by the PWDs. Authorities here refer to the in-charged person managing and controlling the situation in the tourism spots. It can be either the tourism agencies' officers or the government authorities.

Accordingly, the authorised should understand that ordinary tourists and PWDs have different abilities. In this case, the same treatment for both parties is not encouraged. Specific understanding and flexibility towards PWDs in travelling and visiting may help them.

### (3) Low desired Facilities services for PWDs

Another significant barrier for the PWDs to travel is limited facilities in a tourist destination, making their life difficult. According to Chang and Chen (2012), most PWDs' frequent complaints about airport facilities and services involve the long distance between parking spaces and terminals and the lack of barrier-free lifts and ramps.

A study by Dimou et al. (2016) strengthens that if there is an increase in the diversity and quality of facilities for people with disabilities, it will increase tourists' enjoyment and the number of visitors and destination diversification.

Based on the FGD, the PWDs highlighted that they are facing issues with the design of the commonly used facilities whereby they argued that those designs are not user-friendly for them.

Commonly used facilities such as LRT, hotel rooms, lifts, toilets, and pedestrian crossings on the road are designed with some limitations for PWDs users. The safety design of LRT is highly consented to among PWDs since using the automatic system whereby PWDs not easy to react fast in certain situations.

This situation becomes more complicated when there is an interchange at the LRT station. The same problem for pedestrian cross lights nearby busy streets whereby the light is too short. Hotels and homestays are essential elements in tourism.

Based on the FGD, PWDs highlighted that the hotel rooms are not PWDs friendly. For instance, the standard hotel room doorknob height and the height of the hotel room cardholder are the common issues faced by the PWDs in the standard hotel room. Next, restrooms provided in tourist destinations are mostly not PWDs friendly.

A study by Isa et al. (2016) highlighted that even though the accessible toilet complies with the MS standards, the doors do not follow the standards and cause difficulty to wheelchair users.

Some of the accessible toilets are closed to avoid vandalism, and some are also closed due to poor facility maintenance. It is understood that a specific toilet is allocated for PWDs, but it is not available in most areas.

Some are old and not well maintained. Due to this matter, PWDs must use standard toilets. However, those toilets are not fit for the PWDs' tourist usage. Tourism spot management must ensure that the facilities provided to the PWDs are well in shape. Provided the facilities do not mean they are in good use. If the facilities are poorly maintained, it could indicate they are unavailable.

Lastly, inadequate transportation for PWDs facilities to travel is another barrier PWDs face. For example, buses without hydraulic facilities are the common issues highlighted by PWDs.

#### (4) Systemic Discrimination towards PWDs

Discrimination towards PWDs is also a barrier faced by PWDs. Travel agencies, for example, tend to look down on PWDs and do not see PWDs as the potential influencer toward tourism growth in Malaysia.

From the perspective of tourism agencies, the facilities of the PWDs are limited in the tourism spots due to the lack of demand from PWDs.

Thus, providing more allocation for something unprofitable will not be the motif of private entities. However, from the PWDs' point of view, even if they are interested in visiting, they cannot do that since the tourism agencies did not prepare any special packages for the PWDs.

Thus, joining the standard tourism packages will be completed for PWDs since they may not have access to the PWDs' facilities, such as a restaurant with no PWD facilities. In addition, PWDs argued that the tourism agencies focus on the product type, but the services are overlooked.

## **(C) The strategies to ensure the accessibility of facilities for tourists with disabilities**

### **(1) Moving Toward PWDs Friendly Cities**

Under the strategy of the move towards the PWDs friendly city, priorities should be given to the PWDs facilities in tourist spots and public places.

All the old and repaired facilities should be renovated. Rather than facilities, other automatic services such as road walking light, LRT, lift, and other relevant services should also consider the PWDs. Those are the commonly used services for ordinary citizens as well as PWDs.

Government should play a role in identifying and listing the PWDs' friendly places to encourage PWDs to travel. Besides providing facilities and services, the government should draft a route map to PWDs friendly places.

This map may show how the PWD's social services can be delivered to encourage PWDs' participation in tourism. These steps will make it easy for PWDs to plan their trip without worrying about the facilities.

However, the private sector should play its part as well. For instance, if hotels or tourism spots can label or categorise themselves as PWDs friendly, then some initiatives such as tax exemption or other relevant flexibility can be given to the private sector. The last strategy under the PWDs friendly cities will be to increase accessibility.

Accessibilities are not only defined as providing the facilities to the PWDs, but it is also about the ease for the PWDs to access the facilities. For instance, a hotel will have five floors; the PWDs toilet is only available on the first floor, and a standard toilet is available on all floors. Does this reflect easy and friendly accessibility?

Therefore, the facilities provided should be user-friendly to all users. Old tourism spots should consider upgrading the PWDs facilities with the government's help. The government can launch a program to promote the old tourist spots to refresh the aged facilities.

## (2) Provide rules and rewards for those private parties to promote PWDs' user-friendly facilities and tourism packages

The second strategy is to provide rules and rewards for those private parties to promote PWDs' user-friendly facilities and tourism packages. The rule and reward for those who encourage PWDs user-friendly may be delivered by obligation requirement, blue badge award, and monitoring team.

We may help the tourism provider by narrowing down the guideline and look forward to assisting them to get a legal license should they legally operate.

In addition, FDG also suggested that the government of Malaysia create a monitoring team and work closely to monitor private parties by encouraging the private parties to provide and develop more facilities that meet the PWDs' needs while they travel.

In this situation, private parties that support and are excellent should be awarded. Indirectly we believe all the awards achieved will become a push factor for the tourism provider to improve their facilities to meet the need of PWDs increasingly.

### (3) Equalise opportunities and remove discrimination against PWDs

PWDs are eligible to get fair opportunities as ordinary citizens in Malaysia. Equalised opportunities are a condition of fairness in which persons are treated equally, without regard for artificial obstacles, biases, or preferences, unless specific disparities can be adequately explained.

Based on FGD, there are three types of equalisation opportunity, and the removal of discrimination be highlighted. The first one is disability awareness raising among Malaysians. Disability awareness is the practice of understanding, recognising, and appreciating the experiences of those with disabilities.

Knowledge, awareness, and going beyond one's comfort zone are also essential to gaining a more profound understanding. Through disability awareness, misperceptions and preconceptions about people with disabilities may have come to attention.

Developing more profound knowledge is a potent means of raising awareness. We must raise public awareness through school programs and create a culture of helping each other.

The second point is the voice out from the side of PWDs. People use their voices daily to convey their needs and desires, but "voice" encompasses much more. A voice gives a person autonomy, authority, and a means to communicate their interests. So, a representative from the PWDs can bring out their pain and suffering and help others understand their feelings and situations.

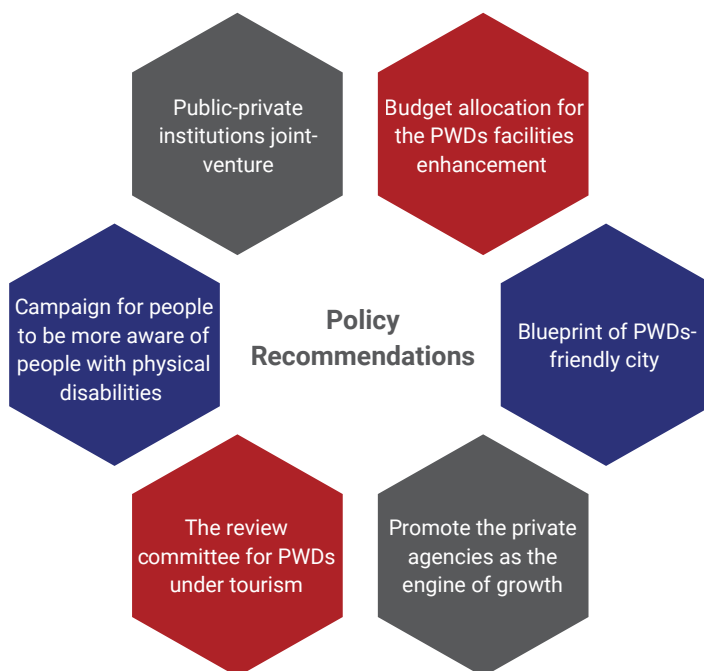
It is, lastly, providing more opportunities to PWDs in all areas. PWDs should get equal opportunities in terms of jobs and education. The government should implement a salary subsidy scheme that gives a monetary incentive to firms that hire individuals with disabilities.

Furthermore, inclusive education systems can raise the voices of students with disabilities so they may be heard in life-altering choices.

## Policy Recommendations

Some policy recommendations are listed below based on discussing the existing policies and their weaknesses.

Thus, the policy improvements suggested are favourable toward enhancing the PWDs' involvement in tourism activities and strengthening the current National Recovery Plan.



## Conclusion

According to the United Nations (2003), the main problem preventing PWDs from pleasantly enjoying their leisure time as guests and meeting too many impediments is accessibility.

Notably, although other tourists have reported higher participation rates in travel, PWDs have reported lower engagement rates in tourism.

Furthermore, the tourist industry might increase accessibility and services for these guests. As a result, this study generated a preliminary debate on existing studies on PWDs policy and theories to grasp the gaps in current research.

As a result, an approach for future study development has been presented. We expect this will enhance the desire to travel among people with disabilities.

In a nutshell, this study will considerably boost future national tourism.

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