

The Role of Civic Community in Realising Inclusive Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities: a Case Study of the Sehati Organisation in Sukoharjo

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Abstract

This research analyses the role of the civic community in realising inclusive employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, using the Sehati Organisation in Sukoharjo Regency as a case study. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design and Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalist theoretical framework (AGIL), this study finds that Sehati functions as a compensatory subsystem amidst the dysfunction of the formal labour market. The organisation executes four systemic functions: adaptation (aligning skills with the needs of the garment industry and mobilising funds); goal attainment (advocating for rights and economic independence, despite minimal absorption by the formal sector); integration (building internal cohesion through community enterprise groups and external strategic partnerships); and latency (transforming members' mindsets and employing cultural approaches to erode stigma). However, its effectiveness is hindered by persistent cultural stigma in workplaces that remain exclusive, alongside the organisation's limited financial resources. In conclusion, achieving substantive employment inclusion requires not only skills-enhancement interventions, but also the reform of industrial culture and the strengthening of financial sustainability for supporting organisations.

Keywords: Civic Community, Inclusive Employment Opportunities, Structural Fungsionalism

Introduction

Everyone has the right to decent work regardless of economic, social, cultural, and political status, whether they belong to the majority, minority, or marginalised groups. Persons with disabilities constitute one such minority group in society, whose fulfilment of economic rights still faces significant barriers. The normative guarantee of the right to work for persons with disabilities has been constitutionally affirmed in Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and operationalised through Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities. In contemporary discourse, the right to work essentially culminates in the fulfilment of the right to inclusive economic independence a concept that encompasses not

only access to wages, but also entrepreneurial freedom, capacity building, and equitable access to productive resources. From this perspective, the right to work must be comprehensively understood as the right to a dignified livelihood, wherein persons with disabilities are positioned as economic subjects with full agency.

Despite the adequate availability of this juridical foundation, an empirical gap in the right to work persists. Field realities demonstrate that normative guarantees on paper have not automatically translated into equal economic opportunities. An analysis of the National Labour Force Survey (Sakernas) reveals that the proportion of persons with disabilities in Indonesia participating in the labour force is only 44.55 per cent, significantly lower than the 70.01 per cent for

non-disabled persons (Center for Inklusive Policy dan Inlusion Advisory Group, 2025). Meanwhile, at the local level, such as in Sukoharjo Regency, although there are thousands of working-age persons with disabilities, data from the local Social Service indicate that their absorption rate into the formal labour market remains extremely low, at approximately 0.01 per cent, with the majority trapped in the informal sector or reliant on social assistance (SoloPos, 2022). This occurs not only because persons with disabilities often lack adequate skills, but also due to persistent social stigma and unequal access to capital and markets. This gap between *das Sollen* and *das Sein* is clearly illustrated by Ayumi et al. (2025), who state that persons with disabilities still frequently face various forms of discrimination, particularly concerning physical and mental health requirements that are often imposed as mandatory general provisions for employment access.

In an effort to bridge this gap, the state has introduced affirmative instruments through employment quota provisions (a minimum of 1% for the private sector and 2% for government agencies and state-owned enterprises). This policy is designed to ensure the representation of persons with disabilities in the formal workforce. However, its implementation on the ground still faces the serious challenge of trivialisation. (Poerwanti, 2017) and Arifah & Amri (2023) assert that the absence of strict administrative sanctions or legal penalties results in businesses lacking full commitment, viewing the recruitment of persons with disabilities merely as a symbolic gesture to fulfil quotas. This aligns with the findings of Shaleh (2018), who highlights that weak labour inspection functions across various industrial zones lead to the frequent neglect of the obligation to meet disability quotas. This charitable paradigm ultimately restricts persons with disabilities to entry-level positions that do not guarantee long-term career mobility or economic independence. This condition is particularly palpable in labour-intensive industrial areas such as Sukoharjo Regency, where the garment and manufacturing sectors, which form the backbone of the local economy, tend

to apply highly exclusive and rigid recruitment standards.

The failure of the state and the labour market to accommodate the rights of persons with disabilities creates what is termed in sociology as systemic dysfunction. The findings of the Independent Final Evaluation International Labour Organization (2020) on the Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy confirm that even at the global level, workplace disability inclusion still faces structural dysfunction in the form of weak organisational leadership, the absence of dedicated budgets, and minimal recruitment of persons with disabilities at all levels. It is within this context that the presence of civic communities, such as the Sehati Sukoharjo organisation, becomes vital. Civic communities are no longer viewed merely as social support groups, but function as compensatory subsystems operating at the grassroots level to restore balance to the inequitable formal employment system. Through a collective approach, Sehati creates an inclusive micro-economic ecosystem, facilitates access to micro-capital, and builds peer-support systems that enable its members to become independently empowered.

Although the internal empowerment role undertaken by the Sehati Sukoharjo Organisation as a civic community has had a significant impact on strengthening the individual capacity of its members, field realities show that they still face substantial difficulties in sustainably penetrating the formal labour market. External barriers, in the form of deeply entrenched stigma, rigid industrial work cultures, and asymmetrical access to macro-markets, render inward-looking empowerment approaches insufficient. The effectiveness of a civic community in realising inclusive employment opportunities is highly determined by its ability to position itself as a strategic actor to integrate local potential into the broader social system.

To dissect this phenomenon comprehensively, this study adopts Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalist theoretical framework. This theory is chosen for its ability to analyse how subsystems within society interact to maintain dynamic

equilibrium, and how dysfunction in one subsystem can be compensated for by another. Drawing upon this theoretical framework, this study aims to analyse in depth how the Sehati Sukoharjo Organisation executes its role in carrying out the four systemic functions (AGIL) and the organisational barriers in facilitating persons with disabilities to penetrate the formal labour market ecosystem.

Literature Review

Concept of Role

A role is the dynamic aspect of a status; when an individual exercises their rights and obligations in accordance with their status, they are performing a role (Soekanto, 2009). In other terminology, a role refers to the actions performed by an individual in a given situation or event (Syamsir, 2014). The role to be performed by an institution or organisation is typically regulated by a provision that constitutes the function of that institution. In this research, Sehati's role as an organisation relates to its function as an advocacy and empowerment institution aimed at assisting persons with disabilities in obtaining equitable access to employment.

Concept of Civic Community

The concept of a civic community is defined as a forum or platform where individuals, as members of society, gather in the form of social or economic organisations (Tolbert, 2005). Meanwhile, Winataputra (2012) equates civic community with civil society, referring to the development of the role of community and citizenship organisations outside of state structures to achieve social justice and social welfare in accordance with Pancasila. The concept of a civic community serves as a social entity that bridges the political and sociological dimensions, wherein citizens organise and participate actively for the common good. In this research, Sehati can be described as a civic community because it is a non-governmental organisation born from the

community, for the disability community, to achieve justice in the public sphere.

Inclusive Employment Opportunities

Inclusive employment opportunities are not merely the availability of vacant positions in the labour market, but rather an employment ecosystem grounded in substantive justice and equal rights. Ayumi et al. (2025) assert that inclusive legal protection focuses on the principles of substantive justice, equality, and the elimination of discrimination to ensure that vulnerable groups have fair access without architectural barriers or social stigma. Within the legal framework in Indonesia, the paradigm of recruiting persons with disabilities has shifted from a charitable approach towards the fulfilment of human rights, as critiqued by Poerwanti (2017), who highlights that businesses have historically viewed the recruitment of persons with disabilities merely as an act of charity.

Based on Law No. 8 of 2016, the fundamental rights of workers with disabilities are explicitly guaranteed through key pillars: the right to access employment in both the public and private sectors, fair remuneration, the provision of reasonable accommodation, and protection from discrimination and unilateral termination of employment. This law also strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination, which Ayumi et al. (2025) define as any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or coercion that hinders persons with disabilities from fully realising their rights, with criminal sanctions for violators.

Thus, inclusive employment opportunities for persons with disabilities represent the manifestation of fulfilling human rights and binding legal obligations. In the context of this research, this understanding serves as the foundation for analysing how the Sehati Sukoharjo Community advocates for the fulfilment of these rights amidst the dysfunction of the formal employment structure.

Structural Functionalism Theory

Talcott Parsons views society as a complex social system wherein each subsystem has a function to maintain equilibrium. When macro-structures experience dysfunction, such as the formal labour market failing to absorb persons with disabilities, other subsystems, such as civic communities, emerge as compensatory mechanisms to restore this balance. To explain how a social system can survive and function, Parsons formulated the AGIL schema, which consists of four functional imperatives: (1) *Adaptation*, the system's ability to adapt to its environment and mobilise resources for survival; (2) *Goal Attainment*, the system's capacity to establish and achieve collective goals; (3) *Integration*, the ability to maintain internal solidarity while building harmonious relationships with external parties; and (4) *Latency*, the function of maintaining and transmitting core values so that the system does not lose its identity and motivation (Ritzer & Douglas, 2013).

In the context of this research, the AGIL schema is used to analyse how the Sehati Sukoharjo Community executes its compensatory function amidst the dysfunction of the formal labour market. The four AGIL dimensions provide a systematic framework for understanding the adaptation strategies, goal attainment, social integration, and value maintenance undertaken by the community in realising inclusive employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, conducted at the Secretariat of the Sehati Disability Association in Sukoharjo, Central Java, between May and June 2026. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, comprising core management (key informants), independent members with disabilities (primary informants), and external stakeholders such as government agencies or industry representatives (supporting informants).

Data collection was conducted through field observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews operationalised using the AGIL framework, and documentary analysis. Data validity was established through the triangulation of sources and techniques. Subsequently, data analysis utilised the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which comprises data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. This process aims to synthesise empirical findings with the AGIL theoretical framework to formulate strategic recommendations for the civic community in accelerating employment inclusion.

Result and Discussion

Result

The Role of the Sehati Organisation in Realising Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

In structural functionalist theory, social order can only be achieved if the elements within society fulfil their functions. Within the social system, the Sehati organisation constitutes one of the social structures that possesses a social institutional function capable of maintaining and realising social equilibrium in society. The issue of inadequate accessibility for persons with disabilities in the employment sector in Sukoharjo Regency is not merely a matter of stigma, but also indicates the dysfunction of social structures that ought to be functioning. According to Talcott Parsons' structural functionalist theory, every social structure performs four primary functions: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency.

a. Adaptation

This indicator illustrates how the Sehati organisation mobilises resources and adapts to the work environment in Sukoharjo, demonstrating the execution of its adaptive function. In executing its resource-mobilisation function, Sehati strives to align the skills of persons with disabilities with the industrial needs of Sukoharjo. This is

articulated in the following interview with the Chairperson of the Sehati Organisation:

“Sehati has provided sewing training for working-age persons with disabilities. We have tailored this to the industrial needs in the Sukoharjo area, where the majority of industrial enterprises are garment and sewing companies.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This statement is corroborated by field observations conducted on 25 May 2026, which identified 10 sewing machines at the secretariat office of the Sehati Sukoharjo organisation (Observation Data, 2026). These findings are further confirmed by organisational documentation indicating the implementation of training activities, such as sewing. For instance, on 5 May 2021, a sewing training session was conducted for participants with disabilities at the Sehati secretariat.



Figure 1. Sewing Training at the Sehati Organisation

The image above documents the implementation of SEHATI Sukoharjo's internal economic empowerment programme. It shows a member using a wheelchair being trained to operate an industrial sewing machine.

In terms of resource mobilisation to fund training facilities, the Sehati organisation relies on grant funds from the national government, international organisations, and general public donations. The Chairperson of the Sehati Organisation stated that:

“Our organisation’s funding rests on three main pillars. First, support from international and national donor institutions such as Voice Indonesia, the Disability Rights Fund (DRF), and the NLR Indonesia Foundation, which

specifically fund strategic advocacy programmes. Second, government support through grants from the Sukoharjo Regency Government and Village Budget (APBDes) allocations for empowerment programmes at the sub-district level. Third, we manage a Multipurpose Cooperative and a Joint Business Group (KUBE) operated directly by persons with disabilities, where the profits generated are allocated to the organisation’s routine operations.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This statement by the Chairperson of the Sehati Organisation is corroborated by information indicating that Sehati has opened donation channels to assist persons with disabilities in Sukoharjo, as illustrated in the following documentation data.

KONTAK DAN DONASI

PERKUMPULAN SEHATI SUKOHARJO

Jl. Kresno, Pulosari Rt 03, Rw 04, Gayam, Sukoharjo, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

Email : sehati.sk@gmail.com Web : www.sehatidifabel.id

Phone : +62 822 6503 4295

No Rekening Donasi :

Bank Mandiri : 1380031155554

An. Perkumpulan Sehati Sukoharjo

Figure 2. Donation Account

Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that Sehati already plays a role in adaptation efforts, which include aligning the industrial needs in Sukoharjo with the skills of persons with disabilities mentored by the Sehati organisation through sewing training, as well as establishing funding channels from various national and international donors.

b. Goal Attainment

In Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalist theory, Goal Attainment refers to the capacity of a social system to define, establish, and achieve its primary objectives effectively. In the context of the SEHATI Sukoharjo organisation, the Goal

Attainment function is evaluated through the organisation's ability to set concrete targets and realise them in its efforts to achieve inclusive employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

According to the Chairperson of the Sehati Sukoharjo Organisation:

“SEHATI Sukoharjo is not a charitable institution, but rather focuses on the fulfilment of rights, policy advocacy, and economic independence. Our concrete targets include placing workers with disabilities in the private sector, monitoring the implementation of Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 18 of 2017, as well as advocating for Village Regulations (Perdes) and Village Budgets (APBDes) to support Inclusive Villages, the formation of Inclusion Clubs, advocating for reasonable accommodation in public services, inclusive disaster mitigation, the elimination of leprosy-related stigma, and monitoring the distribution of assistance for persons with disabilities (ASPD).” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This is reinforced by a statement from a staff member of the Sehati organisation, who stated:

“We target the absorption of workers with disabilities in several companies around Sukoharjo, although we do not set specific numerical targets.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

These targets are further substantiated by the following documentation. Firstly, concerning advocacy targets alongside empowerment targets.



Figure 3. Advocacy and Empowerment Targets

Among the targets implemented by Sehati, several achievements have been realised, including the enactment of various disability-related regulations, the establishment of businesses by persons with disabilities that have been absorbed into the formal sector, and the placement of several persons with disabilities in formal employment.

This aligns with the statement of the Chairperson of the Sehati Organisation, who stated:

“The majority of persons with disabilities in Sukoharjo work in the informal sector, such as running their own businesses as street vendors or micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), or engaging in farming and livestock rearing. A few work in the formal sector, such as at the Sritek garment company prior to being placed through an outsourcing arrangement, and there is also one individual working in the finance sector. Nevertheless, we still find it difficult to penetrate formal employment due to the persistent negative stigma against persons with disabilities.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This statement demonstrates that the majority of employment opportunities targeted by Sehati are predominantly within the informal sector rather than the formal sector. This is further supported by data from Sehati's documentary research findings.

NO	NAMA PERUSAHAAN	BIDANG USAHA	JUMLAH TOTAL PEKERJA	JUMLAH PENYANDANG DISABILITAS			
				LAK-LARI	PEREMPUAN	JUMLAH	PERSENTASE
1	SEHATI		11	1	1	2	18.18
2	SEHATI		11	1	1	2	18.18
TOTAL				2	2	4	36.36

PERUSAHAAN SWASTA							
NO	NAMA PERUSAHAAN	BIDANG USAHA	JUMLAH TOTAL PEKERJA	JUMLAH PENYANDANG DISABILITAS			
				LAK-LARI	PEREMPUAN	JUMLAH	PERSENTASE
1	PT. PAN RAMA VISTA	GAJAMINT	809	0	11	11	1.37
2	GAJAMINT		809	0	0	0	0
3	PT. DAN RALS	MESEK	6.932	25	20	45	0.65
4	PT. BATEKERS	TEKSTIL	700	0	0	0	0
5	PT. SRI REJENI (SIAM)	TEKSTIL	12.100	35	30	65	0.54
6	PT. RAYON UTAMA	TEKSTIL	1.100	0	0	0	0
7	PT. JAYA PERAGA	GAJAMINT	1.428	2	6	8	0.56
8	PT. MALICZONI	MANGANAN	139	0	0	0	0
9	PT. INDIOPROKAMA	GAJAMINT	458	0	0	0	0
10	PT. JAYA PRABES	PERSEK	100	1	1	2	2
11	PT. CITRA MALL INTIMATES	GAJAMINT	800	1	4	5	0.63
12	PT. PAN RAYA GARMINT	GAJAMINT	1.400	0	0	0	0
13	PT. SURWID GARMINT	INDONESIA	1.200	0	4	4	0.33
14	PT. DELTA DUNIA TEKSTIL	TEKSTIL	900	1	1	2	0.22
15	PT. SARASADOR	GARMINT	1.434	3	6	9	0.63
16	PT. PALAZA		10	0	0	0	0
17	PT. SUKOHARJO		10	0	0	0	0
18	TOTAL			45	45	90	1.37

Figure 4. Results of Sehati Documentation Research

Based on the data above, an analysis of Sehati Sukoharjo's Goal Attainment function reveals a gap between normative objectives and empirical realisation regarding the absorption of workers with disabilities

into the formal sector. Although strategic goals have been established, the organisation's achievements remain dominated by the informal sector through subsistence work, while access to the formal sector remains highly limited.

c. Integration

In Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalist theory, Integration refers to the capacity of a social system to maintain cohesion and prevent conflict through the regulation of both internal and external relationships. In the context of Sehati Sukoharjo, this function is evaluated through the organisation's ability to unite members with diverse types of disabilities and build strategic partnerships with the government, the private sector, and donor institutions.

Regarding the maintenance of cohesion and the prevention of conflict through internal and external relationships, the Chairperson of the Sehati Organisation stated:

“To ensure that members with disabilities from various backgrounds do not feel marginalised, we divide our programmes into specific groups according to their needs. However, to maintain a unified voice, we bring them together in matters of economic independence through the Cooperative and the Joint Business Group (KUBE). For external relations, we always seek common ground. With the Sukoharjo Manpower Office (Disnaker), we divide the tasks: we embrace and mentor persons with disabilities from the villages until they are ready, and only then do we submit their data to the Manpower Office to be channelled to companies. As for private companies, we never approach them demanding quota fulfilment. We come with solutions, presenting prospective workers whose mindset and skills we have already trained, and we also accompany the companies to help make their workplaces more inclusive.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This is further reinforced by data from Sehati's organisational documentation, which highlights efforts to strengthen the

bonds of solidarity and fellowship among persons with disabilities.



Figure 5. Regular SHG Meeting

The image above illustrates the implementation of grassroots strategies undertaken by SEHATI Sukoharjo through the establishment of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) at the village level. These regular monthly meetings serve to update disability data while simultaneously strengthening the bonds of solidarity and fellowship among persons with disabilities.



Figure 6. Regular Joint Business Group (KUBE) Meeting

The image above illustrates the tangible implementation of the economic empowerment programme facilitated by SEHATI Sukoharjo, namely the Joint Business Group (KUBE). This forum is utilised to continuously motivate members to maintain their spirit of economic independence. Meanwhile, in maintaining relationships with external parties, Sehati has established various partnerships with both non-governmental and governmental organisations at the national and international levels. This is evident from the following documentation.

Mitra dan pendukung :

- Voice Indonesia
- Disability Right Found
- Yayasan NLR Indonesia
- Uni Eropa
- The Asia Foundation
- GIZ German
- Caritas Germany
- Pusat Rehabilitasi Yakkum Yogyakarta
- Pemerintah Kabupaten Sukoharjo
- Dinas Tenaga Kerja Wonogiri
- Dinas Tenaga Kerja Boyolali
- BPBD Sragen
- UCP Roda Untuk Kemanusiaan

Figure 7. Partners and Supporters

The image above shows the list of partners and supporters of SEHATI Sukoharjo, which includes international donor institutions (European Union, The Asia Foundation, GIZ Germany), humanitarian organisations, as well as local government agencies (Sukoharjo Regency Government, Manpower Offices of Wonogiri & Boyolali, and the Regional Disaster Management Agency of Sragen). This multi-sector partnership demonstrates that SEHATI has a strong support network from the local to the international level to realise the empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities in Sukoharjo.

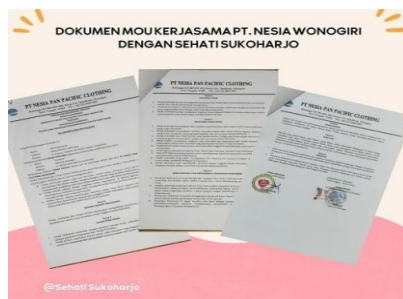


Figure 8. Partnership Document with a Limited Liability Company (PT)

The image above provides concrete evidence of the external integration strategy implemented by SEHATI Sukoharjo. As a realisation of the target to place workers with disabilities, SEHATI does not merely engage in verbal advocacy, but also formalises cooperation with private enterprises through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PT NESIA PAN PACIFIC CLOTHING.



Figure 9. Coordination with the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and Small and Medium Enterprises

The image above provides concrete evidence of SEHATI Sukoharjo's external integration strategy in the realm of economic empowerment. This coordination with the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and MSMEs (*DisdagKop UKM*) represents a form of strategic collaboration between the disability organisation and the local government. The objective is to obtain guidance, access to capital, and legal status for the Multipurpose Cooperative and the Joint Business Group (KUBE) managed by its members.



Figure 10. Participation of International Donors

The image illustrates SEHATI Sukoharjo's involvement in a regional project supported by international donors (European Union). This participation represents an external integration strategy to expand advocacy networks and access global resource support, while simultaneously reinforcing SEHATI's position as part of a civil society movement connected at both national and international levels.

The interview and documentary data are supported by observation results from 17 June 2026 during an inclusive disaster risk

reduction facilitator training activity in Sragen Regency. This activity was conducted in collaboration with the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) of Sragen Regency, the Social Service, the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), and the LIDi PB Unit, indicating that Sehati has made efforts to build partnerships.

Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that SEHATI Sukoharjo executes the Integration function through a dual strategy. Internally, the organisation prevents conflict among different types of disabilities by decentralising programmes into specific groups, while simultaneously uniting members in economic independence through Cooperatives, KUBE, and SHG. Externally, SEHATI builds strategic partnerships with the Manpower Office (Disnaker), private enterprises (PT Nesia Pan Pacific Clothing), the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and MSMEs (DisdagKop UKM), international donors (European Union), as well as the BPBD Sragen and the Social Service in inclusive programmes.

d. Latency (Note: Adjusted from 'a' to 'd' to maintain the logical AGIL sequence)

Latency in Talcott Parsons' theory is the function of a social system to maintain core values, norms, and motivation so that they remain alive and do not fade over time. This function encompasses two main aspects: maintaining the spirit and internal solidarity of members, and socialising these values to the external environment so that they are accepted as social norms. In the context of SEHATI Sukoharjo, this function is manifested through efforts to maintain members' motivation to remain independent and not revert to a dependency mentality, while simultaneously educating the wider community so that the value of inclusion becomes part of daily culture.

Maintaining the spirit and motivation of members requires continuous and directed efforts. According to the Chairperson of the Sehati Organisation:

"At the internal level, our main focus is to transform members' mindsets from initially feeling like a burden to their families, to becoming individuals who are proud of their potential and self-worth. We do not achieve

this merely through charitable assistance, but rather through peer-support mechanisms. We routinely hold forums to mutually strengthen and appreciate small achievements, while continuously instilling the understanding that disability issues are matters of Human Rights, not merely charity." (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This statement is reinforced by documentation results concerning activities conducted by Sehati with peers and persons with disabilities.



Figure 11. Overview of Activities for Persons with Disabilities at Sehati

This image illustrates that Sehati consistently strives to engage persons with disabilities in joint activities for self-development, whether through training in crafts such as weaving and rice husk briquette production, or through seminars related to inclusivity.

Meanwhile, to eliminate the negative stigma surrounding disability within the Sukoharjo community, Sehati recognises that formal approaches alone are insufficient. As stated by the Chairperson of Sehati:

"We employ a cultural approach that involves religious figures and local leaders. We interact directly in various community social activities to shift the perspective from pity to an understanding that inclusion is an integral part of fulfilling human rights. We also encourage positive competition among villages through the Inclusive Village (Desa Inklusi) programme." (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This data is further reinforced by Sehati's documentation findings, as follows.



Figure 11. Joint Activities with Religious Leaders

This image demonstrates that SEHATI Sukoharjo strives to engage with religious figures at Al Falah Mosque by encouraging persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, to integrate with the community through congregational prayer activities, as well as facilitating discussions with local religious leaders to create an inclusive living environment.

Meanwhile, this data is further supported by additional documentation of Sehati's efforts in campaigning for the importance of equality. This can be observed in the following documentation.



Figure 12. Campaign Commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

This activity was conducted on 14 December 2025, comprising a series of events. The activities commenced with a motorcycle convoy involving two-wheeled and three-wheeled vehicles, followed by group exercise. Furthermore, SEHATI actively conducted educational campaigns on disability rights through the socialisation of laws and regulations, while simultaneously organising skills training to promote the economic independence of its members.

In addition, efforts to build equality were vigorously pursued through socialisation activities. This is supported by the following documentation.



Figure 13. GEDSI Socialisation and Training

This activity was conducted in Sragen on 21 January 2026. It was carried out to strengthen the understanding and commitment of village stakeholders to the principles of GEDSI (Gender, Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion). The activity was attended by village stakeholders, aiming to enhance their capacity to realise inclusive, gender-equitable village development planning that is accessible to vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and other marginalised communities.

Based on this data, it can be concluded that Sehati executes the latency function through the internalisation of values by building internal solidarity and motivation and the externalisation of norms to society through both cultural and formal approaches.

Barriers Faced by the Sehati Organisation in Realising Inclusive Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

Based on the research findings, several barriers were identified in the Sehati organisation's efforts to realise inclusive employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

a. The Presence of Negative Stigma Towards Disability

According to the Chairperson of Sehati, this stigma represents a conflict between the community's role as an advocate

for inclusion and the reality of an industrial culture that remains exclusive. This was expressed as follows:

“Once our members are successfully recruited, the real challenge begins. Many companies in Sukoharjo, particularly in the garment sector, have administratively accepted persons with disabilities, but culturally, they are not yet ready. Persons with disabilities are perceived as working slowly and are thought to merely lower productivity. We have tried to provide accompaniment, but this stigma is deeply rooted in the mentality of most workers. This is not merely a matter of physical accommodation, but a mindset issue that must be changed from within the company itself.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This statement by the Chairperson is strongly validated by the experience of Sehati staff who accompany members through the workplace adaptation process:

“Indeed, workplace stigma is real and significantly affects our members. After being hired, many report still frequently receiving poor treatment from colleagues. They are often made the subject of jokes or ignored. Companies rarely provide inclusion training for regular employees. Consequently, the entire burden of adaptation falls on the person with a disability themselves, and we, as a community, must continuously engage in mediation and accompaniment.” (Interview, 35 May 2026).

Further confirmation comes directly from a person with a disability who has experienced the impact of this stigma firsthand:

“I am grateful to have been accepted to work at a manufacturing company in Sukoharjo thanks to Sehati’s accompaniment. However, the reality on the inside is that I often feel ostracised. My colleagues frequently underestimate my abilities.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

From the data above, it can be concluded that cultural stigma in the workplace is a persistent barrier hindering

inclusivity. Although companies in Sukoharjo have administratively accepted persons with disabilities, the internal work culture remains exclusive and rife with prejudice (e.g., being perceived as lowering productivity, being ostracised, or being made the subject of jokes).

b. Limited Financial Resources

The Chairperson of Sehati explained how financial limitations restrict the community's ability to execute its organisational functions:

“To be honest, our biggest challenge is severely limited operational funding. We rely on uncertain donations and temporary project assistance from the government or NGOs. With a modest budget, we have to divide funds across skills training, psychological accompaniment, policy advocacy, and secretariat operations. Consequently, many programmes cannot be implemented to their full potential. For instance, we wish to conduct more intensive training or provide specialised assistive devices for our members, but the funds are insufficient. This restricts our reach in assisting more persons with disabilities in Sukoharjo.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

This statement by the Chairperson is operationally validated by Sehati staff who directly experience the impact of funding limitations on service quality:

“From an operational perspective, funding limitations significantly affect the quality of accompaniment we can provide.” (Interview, 25 May 2026)

Based on the data, financial limitations restrict both the reach and the quality of the Sehati Community’s empowerment programmes.

Discussion

The Role of the Sehati Organisation in Realising Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

The SEHATI Organisation in Sukoharjo Regency plays a strategic role in bridging the employment accessibility gap for persons with disabilities. From the perspective of Talcott Parsons' structural functionalist theory, the issue of disability employment in Sukoharjo does not merely stem from social stigma, but also indicates a dysfunction within the social structures that ought to be functioning. As a social institution, SEHATI is present to restore the equilibrium of the social system by executing four functions: Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency.

In the dimension of the adaptation function, SEHATI demonstrates the organisation's ability to align internal potential with external environmental demands. The organisation actively maps and tailors the skills of persons with disabilities to the needs of the local industry. Given that the industrial characteristics in Sukoharjo are dominated by the garment sector, SEHATI focuses its empowerment efforts on sewing training. The provision of these training facilities and curricula ensures that the output of the empowerment programmes has direct relevance to labour absorption in the real sector, thereby enhancing the marketability of persons with disabilities in the labour market. Mapping skills to company needs is a highly appropriate strategic step. This aligns with the view of Habiba and Ulum (2024), who argue that it is crucial for disability empowerment actors to align the skills being developed with the demands of the corporate world in the Industry 5.0 era. Therefore, training is required to ensure that persons with disabilities possess capabilities that meet the continuously evolving demands of the labour market.

Beyond programme adaptation, SEHATI also executes adaptation in terms of resource mobilisation to guarantee organisational sustainability. The organisation's financial resilience is supported by three main pillars. First, synergy with national and international donor institutions that fund strategic advocacy programmes. Second, support from the local government through grants and village budget allocations for empowerment programmes. Third,

financial independence through the management of a Multipurpose Cooperative and Joint Business Groups (KUBE) operated directly by persons with disabilities. This diversification of resources proves that SEHATI is capable of adapting to a dynamic environment without losing its autonomy and sustainability.

The Goal Attainment function requires the organisation to establish and realise its objectives effectively. SEHATI positions itself as a rights-based organisation, rather than a charitable institution. The organisation's strategic objectives include placing workers in the private sector, monitoring the implementation of regional regulations (Regional Regulation No. 18 of 2017), the establishment of Inclusive Villages, and advocating for reasonable accommodation in public spaces.

However, in the field, there is frequently a gap between normative objectives and empirical realisation. Although advocacy and empowerment efforts are underway, the absorption of workers with disabilities into the formal sector remains highly limited. The majority of persons with disabilities in Sukoharjo are still absorbed into the informal sector, such as through independent entrepreneurship (MSMEs), farming, and livestock rearing. The primary barrier to penetrating the formal sector is not a lack of competence, but rather the persistent negative stigma and resistance from the industry.

These research findings are supported by the study of Utami et al. (2025), which states that many companies and individuals still view persons with disabilities as a group incapable of contributing maximally in the workplace. This often stems from negative stereotypes that perceive them as a burden or less competent, thereby leading to discrimination in the recruitment process. Meanwhile, companies also frequently struggle to map job types that align with the capabilities of persons with disabilities, and find it difficult to adapt the work environment to accommodate their specific needs.

Due to this persistent negative stigma from companies, SEHATI does not set specific numerical targets for the number of

persons with disabilities to be employed in the formal sector. Instead, the organisation chooses to focus on capacity building and economic independence within the informal sector. This strategy is considered more realistic as it yields faster results for its members, while the organisation continues to advocate for the gradual opening of employment opportunities in the formal sector. This condition indicates that SEHATI's Goal Attainment function, despite yielding progressive policy advocacy achievements, still faces challenges in realising inclusivity within the formal employment sector.

In the dimension of integration, which aims to maintain cohesion and prevent conflict, SEHATI implements a two-pronged integration strategy: internal and external. Internally, the organisation manages the diversity of disability types by decentralising programmes into specific groups according to their needs. This approach prevents feelings of marginalisation among members. Simultaneously, internal integration is reinforced by unifying the vision of economic independence within the framework of the Cooperative, KUBE, and Self-Help Groups (SHG). Regular forums serve as a solidarity-binding mechanism ensuring no member is isolated. Externally, SEHATI builds integration through strategic partnerships that are collaborative rather than confrontational. In partnering with the government (the Manpower Office), there is a synergistic division of roles. SEHATI provides grassroots accompaniment and capacity building, while the Manpower Office facilitates placement within companies. Towards the private sector, SEHATI employs a solution-oriented approach; the organisation does not merely demand quota fulfilment, but rather offers prospective workers who have been mentally and skillfully trained, while also accompanying companies to create a disability-inclusive work environment. This commitment is formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with companies such as PT Nesia Pan Pacific Clothing, as well as cross-sectoral collaboration with the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and MSMEs, international

donor institutions, and regional disaster management agencies.

In this sense, an approach that offers solutions, rather than forcing companies to comply with disability recruitment regulations, is considered more effective. The approach adopted by SEHATI aligns with previous research findings. In a study by Irfansyah et al. (2023), the approach applied by the manpower office was not solely based on mandatory regulations, but also attempted to approach companies in a persuasive manner. In this context, both the government and organisations should strive to convince companies of the benefits and added value gained by recruiting or collaborating with persons with disabilities. The objective is to foster an understanding that the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities are on par with those of other workers.

Furthermore, SEHATI's success in realising inclusive employment opportunities by initiating cooperation with companies through an MoU is a positive step. This is supported by previous research by Poerwanti (2017), which states that a company's success in managing a workforce with disabilities towards workplace inclusion relies on the establishment of cooperation between the company and relevant stakeholders, support from colleagues, the provision of career counselling services, and the accompaniment of employees with disabilities.

In the dimension of the latency function, the focus is on maintaining patterns of values, norms, and motivation to ensure the social system remains stable. At the internal level, SEHATI focuses on mental transformation. Through peer-support mechanisms among persons with disabilities, the organisation continuously revitalises members' motivation to shift from a dependency mentality to becoming independent individuals with self-worth. The issue of disability is reconstructed not as an object of pity, but as a Human Rights issue. At the external level, SEHATI executes the latency function by educating and transforming the culture of the wider community. Recognising the limitations of formal approaches, the organisation adopts a cultural approach by involving religious

figures and local leaders. Direct interaction within religious social spaces aims to shift the paradigm of pity towards an understanding of inclusion and equality. This cultural transformation effort is further reinforced through large-scale public campaigns, the socialisation of regulations, and the incorporation of GEDSI (Gender, Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion) principles into village development planning. These steps ensure that the values of inclusion do not merely exist within the organisation, but are gradually internalised as new norms within the culture of the Sukoharjo community. This aligns with previous research stating that social campaigns involving the general public, community leaders, and persons with disabilities in various activities are capable of creating a collective awareness of the importance of equality for persons with disabilities (Ariel & Islam, 2024).

Barriers Faced by the SEHATI Organisation in Realising Inclusive Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

Although the SEHATI Organisation has executed various strategic functions to encourage inclusivity, efforts to realise truly inclusive employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in Sukoharjo Regency still face structural and cultural barriers.

a. Cultural Stigma in the Workplace

The most dominant barrier faced by persons with disabilities in the Sukoharjo labour market is the clash between administrative compliance and the reality of industrial culture. Many companies, particularly in the garment sector, have administratively accepted persons with disabilities to comply with regulations. However, culturally, their internal work ecosystems are not yet ready to adapt. Negative stigma remains deeply rooted in the mindset of the majority of workers and management, wherein persons with disabilities are often perceived as slow workers who potentially lower company productivity.

This aligns with the research findings of Triyanto et al. (2023), which indicate that

students with disabilities lack the sufficient capacity to succeed in public schools. This perception leads to the exclusion of students with disabilities from schools due to the belief that they cannot meet the school's teaching and learning standards and will fail in assessments. In the context of this research, such negative perceptions of persons with disabilities cause them to be gradually marginalised in the workplace.

Furthermore, this paradox creates an exclusive and unwelcoming work environment. Once successfully recruited, persons with disabilities frequently encounter various forms of discriminatory treatment from regular colleagues, such as being made the subject of jokes, ignored, or having their capabilities doubted. The root of this issue lies in the absence of inclusion training and education for regular employees provided by the company.

This condition results in the burden of adaptation being borne entirely by the persons with disabilities themselves. They are not only required to prove their professional competence but must also survive psychologically within an ostracising environment. Consequently, the SEHATI organisation must continuously engage in mediation and post-placement psychological accompaniment. This underscores that the primary barrier to inclusivity today is no longer merely the provision of physical accommodations or recruitment access, but rather the urgent need for a shift in mindset and the transformation of workplace culture within the companies themselves.

b. Limited Financial Resources of the Community

Internally, SEHATI faces structural challenges in the form of instability and limitations in financial resources. The operational sustainability of the organisation is highly dependent on fluctuating donations and temporary project assistance from the government or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This cash flow uncertainty forces the organisation to allocate its limited budget across various crucial areas, such as skills training, psychological

accompaniment, policy advocacy, and basic secretariat operations.

The direct impact of this financial limitation is the suboptimal implementation of empowerment programmes. The organisation's ambition to organise more intensive and comprehensive training, or to provide specialised assistive devices for its members, is frequently thwarted by a lack of funds. Furthermore, this limitation significantly reduces the quality and intensity of the accompaniment that the organisation's staff can provide to persons with disabilities. Ultimately, this financial constraint limits the reach and impact of SEHATI, preventing the organisation from maximally reaching and empowering a broader number of persons with disabilities in Sukoharjo Regency.

Conclusion

The SEHATI Sukoharjo Organisation has played a functional role in responding to the dysfunction of social structures concerning disability employment. Through the adaptation function, the organisation aligns skills with industrial needs and secures resources. Through the goal attainment function, it establishes an agenda of rights and independence, despite still facing a formidable wall of stigma in the formal sector. Through the integration function, SEHATI builds internal solidarity and extensive external collaborative networks. Finally, through the latency function, the organisation consistently nurtures internal motivation and disseminates the values of inclusion into community culture.

The barriers faced by SEHATI reflect two interrelated dimensions of a challenge. Externally, cultural stigma in the workplace demands significant time and energy from the organisation to conduct continuous mediation. Internally, financial limitations restrict the organisation's capacity to respond to these external challenges more comprehensively and effectively. Together, these two barriers demonstrate that realising inclusive employment opportunities requires not only interventions to provide skills for persons with disabilities, but also cultural reform within the industrial sector and the

strengthening of financial sustainability for supporting organisations.

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