

Conceptualization Of Meaningful Participation As An Instrument For Participatory Legal Awareness Building

*Alfian Reymon Makaruku*¹; *Eivandro Wattimury*²; *Sostoness Y. Sisinaru*³.

Faculty of Law, Indonesian Christian University of Maluku^{1, 2, 3}.

E-mail: alfinreym234@gmail.com, eivandro.wattimury@gmail.com, sostonessisinaru08@gmail.com

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Abstract

Low levels of legal awareness are often caused by a lack of public involvement in the processes of law-making and law enforcement. This study analyses the impact of meaningful participation on the development of legal awareness and conceptualises meaningful participation as a means of fostering legal awareness. It employs a normative legal methodology, utilising both conceptual and statutory approaches. The findings indicate that the concept of meaningful participation in fostering legal awareness can transform technical compliance into the internalisation of values and voluntary compliance with the law, build a participatory and responsive culture of legal compliance, and integrate the enhancement of legal awareness with the practice of deliberative democracy, thereby fostering a sense of ownership of the law. Furthermore, realising “meaningful participation” as an instrument for fostering legal awareness can be achieved through; the provision of access to adequate information, public legal education within inclusive consultative forums, the consistent use of digital technology coupled with accountable evaluation mechanisms, and cross-sectoral collaboration to enhance responsive legal awareness.

Keywords: *Meaningful Participation, Instrument, Legal Awareness.*

A. Introduction

The development of national law is essentially not only oriented towards the formation of formal legal norms, but must also be able to create public legal awareness as the main foundation for effective and consequential enforcement of the law¹. Legal awareness is an important element in the legal system because the success of a rule of law is highly determined by the extent to which the community understands, accepts, and voluntarily complies with the legal norms, the law becomes a guideline in action². Without legal awareness, the law will only be a normative rule that is ineffective in regulating people's lives. From a legal sociology perspective, legal awareness includes aspects of legal knowledge, legal understanding, legal attitudes, and patterns of people's legal behavior

¹ Basri Mulyani, *et.al.*, "Development of Community Legal Awareness Through Legal Awareness Villages in East Lombok Regency", (Juridica – Vol. 2, No. 2, May 2021), p. 105 <https://doi.org/10.46601/juridica.v2i2.190>

² Sy. Hilda Sophia Lianty. A, "Development of Legal Awareness by Notaries as an Effort to Ensure the Validity of Wills", (JurnalKertha Semaya, Vol. 13, No. 12 of 2025), p. 2702 <https://doi.org/10.24843/KS.2025.v13.i12.p01>

towards applicable norms³.

Fostering legal awareness as a strategic effort in realizing a society that understands, internalizes, and implements the rule of law consciously and responsibly⁴. However, in practice, the success of legal coaching is often measured through formal parameters such as the high level of administrative compliance or the frequency of legal socialization. These measures are inadequate if they are not linked to the extent to which communities are actually involved in the legal and policy processes that concern them as legal subjects⁵. If the community is involved in the process, it will indirectly raise awareness of the existence of the law. High legal awareness will encourage voluntary legal compliance (*voluntary compliance*)⁶. Meanwhile, low legal awareness will lead to weak law enforcement effectiveness and increased law violations.

Factually and theoretically, a democratic state of law requires the active involvement of the community in the process of forming, implementing, and enforcing the law in a synergistic manner. Modern democracy is no longer understood simply as a mechanism of formal representation, but as a system that guarantees the substantive participation of the community in every public decision-making process as well as in its implementation. In this context, the development of legal awareness is not only positioned as an instrument of state administration, but as a product of interaction between the state and society that reflects the will of the people to be aware and obey the law⁷. Therefore, community participation is a fundamental element in realizing the development of legal awareness that is responsive, fair, and has social legitimacy.

Public participation in the process of fostering legal awareness should be interpreted as a manifestation of people's sovereignty in a democratic legal state. "Meaningful" public participation or *meaningful participation*⁸ Not only does it mean public presence in forums or consultations, but it also demands that people's voices, aspirations, and inputs are truly heard, considered, and get clear feedback from policymakers or lawmakers⁹. This concept is now increasingly developing as a benchmark for the quality of public involvement in substantive legal policy formation, instead of if possible taking place in the context of current legal awareness development.

Previous research has shown that, to date, legal education has tended to focus on

³ Soerjono Soekanto, "Legal Awareness and Legal Compliance" (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1982). pp. 152-153.

⁴ Wow. Fadlail, "Building Legal Awareness for the Community and Law Enforcement to Create Fair Law Enforcement", (Hukmy: Legal Journal Volume 3, No. 1, 2023), pp. 343-344
<https://doi.org/10.35316/hukmy.2023.v3i1.330-345>

⁵ Vina Utama and Virly Vidiasti Sabijanto. "Increasing Legal Awareness Among Marginalized Communities Through Counseling," (Open Multidisciplinary Journal, Vol.2, No. 1, 2023), p. 47.
<https://doi.org/10.57251/multiverse.v2i2.1130>

⁶ Soerjono Soekanto, Op., Cit.

⁷ Yudhayana, *et.al.*, "The Importance of Legal Awareness in Social Dynamics in Society", (LEGALITY: Scientific Journal of Legal Sciences, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2024), p. 79-96
<https://doi.org/10.31293/lg.v9i1.7885>

⁸ R. W. P. Soeprapto, "Meaningful Participation Through Online Channels In Legislation Making In Indonesia Via DPR. go. id Page", (Trunojoyo Law Review), Volume 6, Number 2, 2024), p. 190.
<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/trunojoyo-law-review/article/view/25960/10074>

⁹ Sarah M. A. Dondokambey, *et.al.*, "The Application of the Principle of Meaningful Community Participation (*Meaningful Participation*) In the Formation of Regional Regulations", *Lex Privatum* Vol.Xi/No.2/Feb/2023, pp. 1-2. <https://ejournal.unsrat.ac.id/v3/index.php/lexprivatum/article/view/46626>

implementation without taking into account the quality and effectiveness of its outcomes¹⁰. Direct legal education programmes for the public have been carried out only to a very limited extent by the relevant agencies and have not yet had a significant impact on raising public legal awareness¹¹. Legal awareness in Indonesia is currently not at its highest level, and there are still many offences committed by members of the public¹².

That the principle of participation is not enough only to be formal or symbolic, but must be meaningful (*meaningful participation*). Principle *meaningful participation* emphasizing the active involvement of the community in the legal process, both in the formation, implementation, and supervision of the law. Broadly speaking, referring to the Constitutional Court Decision Number 91/PUU-XVIII/2020, *Meaningful Participation*¹³ It includes three main elements, namely; Right to be heard (*right to be heard*), The right to be considered (*right to be considered*), and the right to an explanation (*right to be explained*). Meaningful participation should not be interpreted narrowly in the process of forming laws and regulations and other policy processes, but is also important in the process of fostering legal awareness. The principle of participation places the community as a subject of law, not just an object of fostering legal awareness.

Urgency *meaningful participation* In fostering national legal awareness, it can be seen factually, that low public legal awareness is often caused by a lack of community involvement in the legal process. When society is not actively involved, law tends to be seen as an instrument of state power, rather than as a mutually binding social agreement. As a result, it tends to feel like a (*sense of ownership*) against the law, which has an impact on the low level of legal compliance¹⁴. On the contrary, meaningful community participation can increase legal legitimacy, strengthen public trust in the legal system, and increase voluntary legal awareness and compliance.

Based on this description, the principle of meaningful participation as an instrument in fostering legal awareness is an important scientific issue to be examined more deeply. In detail, there are two problems that will be studied in this study. First, what is the relevance of meaningful participation to fostering national legal awareness? Second, how to realize the concept of meaningful participation as an instrument for fostering legal awareness? That, in fact, the law will always develop in line with the development and needs of the law

¹⁰ Muhammad A. Ardiputra, Pola Efektif Pembinaan Hukum untuk Meningkatkan Keberhasilan Pembangunan Hukum, *Jurnal Ilmiah Kebijakan Hukum*, Vol. 15 No. 1, 2021, Hlm. 37–48. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30641/kebijakan.2021.V15.37-48>

¹¹ Yul Ernis, Implikasi Penyuluhan Hukum Langsung terhadap Peningkatan Kesadaran Hukum Masyarakat, *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum Dejure*, Vol. 18 No. 4, 2018, Hlm. 477–496 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30641/dejure.2018.V18.477-496>

¹² Novita A. Putri, Upaya Pembudayaan Kesadaran Hukum di Masyarakat, *Jurnal: De Cive: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan*, Vol. 2 No. 5, 2022, Hlm. 184–192. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56393/deceive.v2i5.1602>

¹³ Helmi Chandra and Shelvin Putri Irawan, "Expanding the Meaning of Community Participation in the Formation of Laws After the Constitutional Court Decision", *Constitutional Journal, Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia*, Vol. 19 No. 4, (2022), pp. 942–945. <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk1942>

¹⁴ "Your Excellency, et.al., "Building Legal Awareness of Citizens Through Civic Participation Competence in Civic Education, ALPHABET: *Journal of Humanities & Education*, Vol. 2 No. 2, August 2024, pp. 91-99 DOI: [10.62079/abjad.v2i2.34](https://doi.org/10.62079/abjad.v2i2.34)

in society. Likewise, in the context of fostering legal awareness, it often needs to be supported by the results of relevant and renewable scientific research and studies.

B. Research Method

Using the normative legal research method, as conveyed by Soerjono Soekanto, normative legal research is carried out on legal principles, legal systematics, legal comparison, synchronization or legal history¹⁵. The normative legal research method was chosen because it conducted a study of the concept *meaningful participation* and fostering legal awareness. In addition, this research is based on the theories and doctrines of experts as material to conduct studies¹⁶. This research uses a literature study approach (*Library Research*). This study did not use field data (*empirical research*), rather, it focuses on the review of relevant legal materials and scientific literature, with an approach that includes; Conceptual approach (*conceptual approach*) used to analyze concepts *meaningful participation*, legal awareness, legal culture, deliberative democracy based on theories put forward by experts, such as Soerjono Soekanto, Lawrence M. Friedman, Satjipto Rahardjo, Sherry R. Arnstein, Philippe Nonet and Philip Selznick and Jurgen Habermas. As for the legislative approach (*Statute approach*), which is used to study relevant laws and regulations.

The legal materials used are; Primary materials are relevant laws and regulations and secondary legal materials in the form of; Law textbooks, articles of national and international scientific journals, that discuss legal awareness, legal culture, and meaningful participation¹⁷. The data analysis was carried out qualitatively with an analytical descriptive method.

C. Results and Discussion

1. The Relevance of *Meaningful Participation* with National Legal Awareness Development

Legal awareness is the main foundation in a country's legal system, especially a democratic country based on the rule of law (*rule of law*)¹⁸. In Indonesia, national legal awareness is not only a symbol of normative formality, but must be articulated substantially through meaningful public participation (*meaningful participation*) in the processes of establishing and strengthening the law¹⁹. Principle *meaningful participation* It is an extension of the public's right to participate in the process of making laws, supervision, and evaluating public policies that require active public involvement rather than just an administrative formality. Meaningful public participation is a type of participation that

¹⁵ Sulaiman Tripa, "Methodological Discourse in Legal Research", (Aceh: Bandar Publishing 2019), p. 73.

¹⁶ Soerjono Soekanto and S. Mamudji, "Normative Legal Research A Brief Review" (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo, 2015), p. 13.

¹⁷ Teguh Prasetyo, "Legal Research", (Bandung: Nusa Media Publisher, 2019), p. 182.

¹⁸ E. Nursetiawan and R. Ardhanariswari, *Meaningful Participation in Legislative Drafting as a Manifestation of a Democratic Rule of Law*, (Jambe Law Journal, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2022), pp. 251-270 <https://doi.org/10.22437/jlj.5.2.251-270>

¹⁹ Wardana, D. J, et.al, "Public Participation in the Law-Making Process in Indonesia", (Journal of Legal Media, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2023), pp. 66-77 <https://doi.org/10.18196/jmh.v30i1.14813>

provides space for the public to be heard, considered, given a response, and accommodated in legal and public policy decision-making²⁰. This is where its direct relevance lies with fostering national legal awareness.

Meaningful participation It is also part of the principle of deliberative democracy, which emphasizes the importance of dialogue between the state and society in the law-making process. Jurgen Habermas explained that legal legitimacy in a democratic country can only be achieved through public participation in the rational public discourse process²¹. Thus, meaningful participation is an important part of creating legal legitimacy and increasing public trust in the legal system.

In theory, legal awareness can be understood as the tendency or disposition of individuals or groups of people to know, understand, respect, and obey the rule of law voluntarily not because of pressure or coercion, but because of the internalization of legal values that make the law seen as something that belongs to the common and becomes the basis for living together in a civilized society. According to Soerjono Soekanto, legal awareness includes four main dimensions: *Knowledge* (legal knowledge), *Understanding* (understanding the law), *Attitude* (attitude towards the law), and behavior (behavior patterns in daily legal life)²².

According to the theory of legal development, legal awareness can be formed through the process of legal education and community legal experience. Community participation in the legal process is one of the effective forms of legal education, because people learn directly through participatory experiences. This is in line with the opinion of Soerjono Soekanto who stated that public legal awareness can be increased through the process of legal socialization and community participation in the legal process²³. With this framework, legal awareness is not just "knowing the rules" but is further in the form of mental and social readiness to respect and support the law itself.

Meaningful participation It becomes relevant to the development of legal awareness because an effective and respected law is determined not only by the power of the rules on paper, but also by the way they are produced, understood, and accepted by the public. Meaningful public participation encourages the formation of legal awareness because the community actively participates in the process of legislation, monitoring, and evaluation of the law, so that they are not only the object of guidance but also active subjects in the development of the law itself. When the public is given space to express their aspirations, provide input, or even criticize draft rules, this process serves as a *process of legal education* or practical legal education that instills legal awareness from the grassroots.

Instrumentation *Meaningful participation as well* is reflected in various constitutional rulings, in which the principle of public involvement in the formation of laws is recognized

²⁰ Suhendarto, B. P. & Handoyo, B, "Meaningful Participation and Regulatory Impact Analysis in Legislation from the Perspective of Habermas' Deliberative Democracy", (Legal Reflections: Journal of Legal Science, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2025), pp. 175–194 <https://doi.org/10.24246/jrh.2025.v9.i2.p175-194>

²¹ Jurgen Habermas, "Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy", (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 304–305.

²² Soerjono Soekanto, Op., Cit. pp. 159-160

²³ Ibid., p. 165

as part of the constitutional rights of citizens²⁴. The Constitutional Court has emphasized that participation in the formation of laws and regulations is not just a formal form of limited public announcement or consultation, but must meet the standard of the right to be heard, considered, and given an explanation of how public contributions are responded to in the products of the resulting rules. This ruling broadens the understanding that participation must be meaningful, not just a formal procedural symbol.²⁵ This means that the public must be given substantive space to influence the direction and content of legal policies (Constitutional Court Decision of the Republic of Indonesia Number 91/PUU-XVIII/2020).

In the perspective of legal sociology, law does not stand as an entity separate from social life; rather, the law lives in the legal culture owned by the community. Lawrence M. Friedman explained that the legal system is effective only when it is supported by a strong legal culture, where people actively have an understanding of and involvement in the law itself²⁶. Legal culture can influence how society responds to the law whether it is considered relevant and fair, or simply an imposed structure. Meaningful participation contributes to the formation of this legal culture because the participatory process builds a sense of ownership. When the community participates in providing input in lawmaking, the legislative process does not feel like an exclusive product of the bureaucratic elite, but as a collective expression of shared social values. This public participation then reflects the internalization of real legal values in people's daily lives.

This relevance becomes even clearer when it is associated with the effectiveness of the rules in their implementation. Laws drafted behind closed doors, without public input, often lead to social resistance, non-compliance, and low legitimacy²⁷. On the other hand, rules born through open dialogue, meaningful public consultation, and accountable feedback mechanisms tend to be easier for the public to understand, accept, and obey. In this context, meaningful participation can be seen as social capital that strengthens legal legitimacy while building legal awareness through the collective learning process²⁸. This process also develops a critical attitude of society towards the law and its formation, in addition to expanding legal knowledge that is practical, not just theoretical.

This framework is in line with the idea of responsive law (*Respondent law*), where the law is not only a regulatory instrument, but also an instrument of social communication that is responsive to the aspirations of society²⁹. Responsive law is a law that opens up a space

²⁴ "Your Excellency, *Limitation of Meaningful Participation Requirements in the Indonesian Law-Making Process*", (Journal of Law and Justice, Vol. 11 No. 3, 2022), pp. 405-436 <https://doi.org/10.25216/jhp.11.3.2022.405-436>

²⁵ Rahmat Mokodompit, et al., "Conceptualizing the Principle *Meaningful Participation* Through Jürgen Habermas's Deliberative Democracy Framework: An Analysis of the Constitutional Court's Decision No. 91/PUU-XVIII/2020", (*Journal of Contemporary Law Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 1, 2025), pp. 113-136 <https://doi.org/10.47134/lawstudies.v3i1.5097>

²⁶ Friedman, Lawrence M, "*The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective*", (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1975). pp. 14-16.

²⁷ M Nurul Fajri, "*Legitimacy of Public Participation in the Establishment of Law in Indonesia*", (Constitutional Journal, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2023), pp. 123-143 <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk2017>

²⁸ Bagus Hermanto, "The Dynamics of Public Participation in Realizing Participatory Legislation", (Judicial Journal, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2023), pp. 205-231 <https://doi.org/10.29123/jy.v16i2.668>

²⁹ Philippe Nonet and Philip Selznick, "*Law and Society in Transition*", (Toward Responsive Law. New York: Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 73-74.

for dialogue between lawmakers and the wider community, so that the goal of law to achieve justice, order, and social benefits can be realized more clearly³⁰. Meaningful participation is the operationalization of this idea of responsive law, because it makes public participation an important means of ensuring that the goals of law formation are in line with the needs and social values that live in society.

In the Indonesian context, the regulation regarding public involvement in the formal legislation process (e.g. in lawmaking) has been recognized in Law Number 12 of 2011 concerning the Formation of Laws and Regulations, which is then refined through the revision and improvement of derivative regulations that affirm the right of the public to provide input orally and/or in writing to draft regulations³¹. This provision shows the formalization of public participation space in the law-making process, but the real challenge does not lie in the existence of formal rules alone, but in the real implementation of meaningful participation in quality. Participation that is merely procedural without substantial impact, without a response from lawmakers, or without clear feedback, tends to only form the illusion of participation and is ineffective in fostering public legal awareness.

Fostering national legal awareness through *meaningful participation* It is also closely related to public administration reform efforts and good governance (*good governance*). In the era of modern democracy, the role of civil society (*Civil Society*)³² and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to be supervisors and catalysts in ensuring that the legislation process is transparent, accountable, and participatory. The involvement of civil society organizations in public policy dialogue, legal counseling, consultation forums, and public tests is a concrete form of meaningful participation that also serves as a medium for fostering legal awareness³³. Through these activities, people not only accept the law as an external burden, but also begin to understand the reasons behind legal norms, as well as realize their rights and obligations as citizens in the context of the law.

Meaningful public participation also has implications for the national legal education system. Formal and non-formal education that integrates an understanding of the right to participate in legal proceedings will help shape a generation that is not only law-abiding, but also active in the formation and improvement of the law³⁴. Legal education that only emphasizes theoretical and compliance aspects without equipping participatory practice skills will be less effective in fostering dynamic legal awareness. Meaningful public

³⁰ Wimmy Haliim, "Indonesian Deliberative Democracy: The Concept of Community Participation in Shaping Responsive Democracy and Law", (Indonesian Society, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2018, pp. 19–30 DOI: 10.14203/jmi.v42i1.556.

³¹ Anita Hilyati, et.al., "Towards Welfare through Community Participation in the Legislation Process in Indonesia", (Indonesian Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence, Economic and Legal Theory Vol. 3 No. 2 (2025), pp. 1251–1266. <https://doi.org/10.62976/ijjel.v3i2.1106>

³² Fitra Hadi Khaz, et.al., "The Role of *Civil Society* in Guarding Public Policy Transparency in Indonesia", (ISO Journal: Journal of Social, Political and Humanities Sciences Vol. 6 No. 1, 2026), pp. 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.53697/iso.v6i1.3623>

³³ Dhiya Fahriyyah Maritza and Taufiqurokhman, "The Role of Civil Society in Improving Bureaucratic Accountability Through Active Public Supervision", (Scientific Journal of Administrative Sciences Vol. 14 No. 1 (2024), pp. 71–84. <https://doi.org/10.33592/jiia.v14i2.4679>

³⁴ Rizky Amalia Putri, et.al, "Reimagining Public Policy and Legal Education for Youth Civic Engagement in Indonesia", (Bridging Structural Capacity Gaps Administratio: Scientific Journal of Public Administration and Development Vol. 16 No. 2 (2025), pp. 171–186. <https://doi.org/10.23960/administratio.v16i2.533>

participation is direct legal education that occurs when an individual or group experiences it practically through involvement in the process of legislation, advocacy, or policy oversight. The existence of the law is not just a symbol of authority, but also a mechanism that maintains the balance of social interaction³⁵.

Thus, the concept *meaningful participation* has a very strong relevance to fostering national legal awareness because; First, the principle *meaningful participation* expanding the notion of legal awareness from mere technical compliance to the internalization of values and social engagement; second, building a participatory and responsive legal culture through a dialogue process between stakeholders; third, increasing the legitimacy and effectiveness of the law through direct public involvement in its formation; and fourth, integrating legal awareness development with deliberative democratic practices and good governance. Therefore, meaningful participation is not just a procedural complement in the national legal system, but a strategic element in the formation of deep, broad, and sustainable legal awareness for all levels of society.

2. Realizing the principle of *meaningful participation* as an instrument for fostering legal awareness.

Meaningful participation emphasizes that community participation in legal processes must be substantive, not just an administrative formality. In the theory of public participation put forward by Sherry R. Arnstein through the concept of *Ladder of Citizen Participation*, meaningful participation is at a level where society has real power in influencing decision-making³⁶. This means that the public is not only given space to express opinions, but these opinions are really considered in the decision-making process. Factually, the low legal awareness of the public is often caused by a lack of understanding of the applicable legal regulations³⁷. There are people who do not know their rights and obligations under the law, which makes them vulnerable to breaking the law. This kind of thing can happen when the community has minimal access to legislation information and space to actively participate in every policy-making process or in terms of the formation of related laws and regulations. Thus, in relation to fostering legal awareness, it is important to have a measurable strategy through the principle *meaningful participation*.

Establishing principles *meaningful participation* As an effective instrument in the process of fostering national legal awareness, it requires an integrated approach between legal aspects, institutions, public education, access to information, operational participatory mechanisms, and the legal culture of the community itself. *Meaningful participation* It is basically not a mere normative concept that is fixated on procedural obligations in the legislative process, but is the essence of deliberative democracy that places society as an

³⁵ S, W. Yudhayana and A. S. Aziz, "The Importance of Legal Awareness in Social Dynamics in Society" (Legality: Scientific Journal of Legal Sciences, Vol. 9 No. 1, 2024), pp. 79–96. DOI: 10.31293/lg.v9i1.7885

³⁶ Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." (*Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 1969), pp. 217–224.

³⁷ Vina Hutama and Virly Vidiasti Sabijanto, "Increasing Legal Awareness Among Marginalized Communities Through Counseling." (*Open Multidisciplinary Journal*, Vol.2, No. 1, 2023), p. 47. <https://doi.org/10.57251/multiverse.v2i2.1130>

active subject in the development of legal norms that govern collective life³⁸. Without a clear strategy, community involvement is often only symbolic and does not have a substantive impact on the legal products produced, so its potential to foster legal awareness is not optimal. There are at least several strategies in realizing the principle of meaningful participation as an important instrument in carrying out legal awareness development.

There is a need to strengthen the legal framework that ensures meaningful public participation at every stage of the formation of laws and regulations at the national and regional levels. This includes not only the formulation of norms that require public consultation, but also provisions that require that public input be formally analyzed, systematically recorded, and taken into consideration in every legal decision taken. For example, Law Number 13 of 2022 concerning the Formation of Laws and Regulations (PPP Law) has regulated the openness and involvement of the community in the legislation process, but further strengthening is needed so that the mechanism is evaluative and has an impact on the content of the rules that are prepared, not just administrative formalities. The strengthening of this normative framework must also include the obligation for lawmakers to provide an official response to every input submitted by the public, and must present a transparent feedback mechanism³⁹. This mechanism is important so that the public sees that their involvement is not in vain, but actually affects the law-making process.

It is necessary to develop a comprehensive, easy-to-understand, and affordable public information access mechanism for all levels of society. Participation cannot be said to be meaningful if the public does not have access to draft legal documents, data supporting policy formation, or information about the urgency of the rules being discussed. Governments and legislative institutions need to make optimal use of information technology through information disclosure portals that are always updated, interactive online forums, and summaries of legal issues that are prepared in simple language but still substantively accurate. Adequate access to information will enable the public to understand the context of a legal issue, so that the input provided becomes relevant and qualitative, and can have an impact on fostering legal awareness through a deep understanding of the legal issues being discussed.

Sustainable legal public education is an important pillar to ensure that public participation is of high quality⁴⁰. Legal education⁴¹ The public should not only be limited to teaching in schools or colleges, but should also include legal campaigns through mass media, social media, community workshops, community discussions, and collaborations with grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Research shows that a low level of legal

³⁸ Suhendarto, B. P. & Handoyo, B, "Meaningful Participation and Regulatory Impact Analysis in Legislation from the Perspective of Habermas' Deliberative Democracy", (Legal Reflections: Journal of Legal Science, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2025), pp. 175–194 <https://doi.org/10.24246/jrh.2025.v9.i2.p175-194>

³⁹ M. Ishomuddin, Deviations from Law Number 13 of 2022 Regarding the Implementation of Meaningful Participation", (Wijaya Putra Journal of Law, Vol. 3 No. 1. 2023) DOI: 10.38156/jihwp.v3i1.210

⁴⁰ T. Dickson, "Legal Education Strategies for the Community: An Analysis of Public Engagement in Legal Education" (Newport International Journal of Research in Education, Vol. 5 No. 2, 2025), pp. 39-45. DOI: 10.59298/NIJRE/2025/523945

⁴¹ A. Balan, "Bridging the Gap: Law Students as Agents of Public Legal Education and Community Empowerment", (International Journal of Clinical Legal Education (IJCLE), Vol. 32 Issue 2 (2025), p. 53. DOI: 10.19164/ijcle.v32i2.1692.

literacy is one of the factors that inhibits meaningful public participation in the legislation process, because without adequate legal knowledge, people tend to have difficulty understanding the substance of the regulations discussed or formulating relevant critical arguments. Therefore, legal awareness development strategies should include democratic, affordable, and sustainable legal education programs held by governments, academics, and civil society organizations collaboratively.

The need for the establishment of a deliberative forum⁴² representative and inclusive as an official forum where policymakers and community representatives can discuss directly, exchange views, and consider rational reasons. The deliberative democratic model places reasoned arguments as the basis for the legitimacy of a decision, not just the number of participants or the majority of votes. Therefore, forums such as open discussions, hearing meetings (*public hearing*), and multistakeholder consultation forums need to be designed in such a way that all community groups, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, have equal access to express their views⁴³.

Strategic use of digital media to expand the reach of community participation that opens up opportunities for communities that are geographically separated, or have mobility limitations, to remain involved in the legislative process through online consultations, online public surveys, or interactive participatory platforms⁴⁴. Governments and legislatures can develop online participation portals that are secure, transparent, and easy to use, so that the public can provide input directly in various stages of the legislation process. In addition, digital media⁴⁵ It can also be used to socialize legal materials in a creative and easy-to-digest format, such as short videos, infographics, or live Q&A sessions (*live streaming*) with policymakers.

Evaluation and accountability are needed to ensure that participatory processes are not only implemented but also evaluated for quality and impact. These evaluations are not only internal in the legislative or executive branches, but can also involve independent parties such as academics and civil society organizations to assess the extent to which meaningful participation has been implemented and whether public input affects regulatory outcomes⁴⁶. Publicly published evaluation reports will increase accountability and encourage the community to continue participating, as the community can see and know the real results of the participation that has been carried out previously.

Ultimately, collaboration between the central government, local governments, parliaments, judicial institutions, civil society organizations, professional communities, and

⁴² Lightbody, R, "Evaluating the Role of Public Hearings within Deliberative Democracy: Operationalising the Democratic Standards as a Framework", (*Journal of Deliberative Democracy*, Vol. 20 No. 1, 2024), pp. 1–14. DOI: 10.16997/jdd.1454.

⁴³ M. Fatchuriza and A. Nurmandi, "Website-Based Deliberative Public Participation in Regional Policy Formulation (Case Study of the Sleman Regency Licensing Office in 2014)", (*Journal of Governance and Public Policy*, Vol. 2 No. 3, 2016), pp. 100–112. DOI: 10.18196/jgpp.v2i3.2133.

⁴⁴ K. Sprenkamp, et.al, "Towards Effective EU E-Participation: The Development of Ask the Public (Preprint, ArXiv), 2025. DOI: 10.48550/arXiv.2504.03287.

⁴⁵ B. Shin, et.al., "A Systematic Analysis of Digital Tools for Citizen Participation" (*Government Information Quarterly*), Vol. 41 No. 3, 2024. DOI: 10.1016/j.giq.2024.101954.

⁴⁶ A. M. Hariawan, "Evaluation of the Community Participation Application Program in Law Drafting (SIMAS PUU)", (*Professional: Journal of Communication and Public Administration*, Vol. 10 No. 1, 2023), p. 239 DOI: 10.37676/professional.v10i1.3923

academics must collaborate systematically to create a conducive participatory ecosystem⁴⁷. This collaboration includes the preparation of technical guidelines for public consultation, training of community facilitators, and the establishment of participatory community networks that are active in various regions. With this kind of collaborative network, the process of participation is no longer fragmentary, but part of a sustainable national legal culture. Structurally, the strategy towards *meaningful participation* as an instrument of fostering legal awareness, it must also pay attention to the socio-cultural dynamics of the pluralistic Indonesian society⁴⁸. Cultural diversity, language, education level, and access to information resources are important variables that must be considered in designing effective participatory strategies. A homogeneous strategy will not be effective if it is applied across regions without taking into account local characteristics. A locality-sensitive approach will ensure that people in different regions feel the legal process is inclusive and relevant to the context of their lives.

Creating a concept *meaningful participation* As an instrument in fostering national legal awareness, a comprehensive strategy is needed that includes strengthening the legal framework, providing access to information, public legal education, inclusive deliberative forums, the use of digital technology, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, and cross-sectoral collaboration. These strategies do not stand alone, but are integrated in an effort to build a democratic participatory culture and deep legal awareness of society.

In fact, when the community is actively involved in the law-making process and feels that their voices are truly heard and considered, legal awareness will increase organically because law is not only understood as a written rule, but as a result of a social dialogue that reflects the collective values of the nation. Quality meaningful participation will strengthen legal legitimacy, increase citizens' compliance with the law, and build a responsive, transparent, and accountable national legal system. Therefore, the strategy formulated must be able to bridge the gap between legal norms and social practices, so that the development of national legal awareness is not only a slogan but a reality felt by all levels of society in order to achieve a law-abiding society.

D. Conclusion and Recommendations

The concept *of meaningful participation* has a strategic position as an instrument for fostering national legal awareness because it is able to bridge the relationship between the state and society in the legal process. Legal awareness as part of the legal *culture* cannot be formed only through normative and repressive approaches, but must be through the active involvement of the community in the process of formation, implementation, and supervision of the law. *Meaningful participation* has a very close relevance to fostering national legal awareness. *Meaningful participation* is not just the formal involvement of the community in the law-making process, but the involvement that is substantively guaranteed through

⁴⁷ Christopher Ansell, et.al, "*Understanding inclusion in collaborative governance: a mixed methods approach*", (Policy & Society, Vol. 39 No. 4, 2020)", pp. 570–591. DOI: 10.1080/14494035.2020.1785726.

⁴⁸ Zaenal Abidin and Titin Rohayatin, *Collaborative Governance Evaluation of Collaborative Governance in Realizing Bureaucratic Reform through Smart City Implementation in Cimahi City*", (Publica: Journal of State Administration Thought), Vol. 17 No. 2, 2025. DOI: 10.15575/jpan.v17i2.45131.

access to information, equal spaces for dialogue, and real consideration of public aspirations. Meaningful *participation* is a manifestation of people's sovereignty as well as a prerequisite for legal legitimacy.

The conceptualization of *meaningful participation* as an instrument for fostering legal awareness shows how legal awareness is not only built through the socialization of norms, but also through the participatory experience of citizens in the legal process itself. When the community is involved in a meaningful way, a sense of *belonging*, responsibility, and *voluntary compliance* with the law grows. Thus, *meaningful participation* is very important to function as an educational, deliberative, and legitimative mechanism in building a participatory legal awareness culture.

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