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**Framing Disability in Malaysian Federal Budget Speeches:
A Discourse Analysis of Disability Policy Narratives (2016-2026)**

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Abstract

Disability policy plays a crucial role in shaping opportunities and social participation for persons with disabilities (PWDs). While existing research has examined disability policy frameworks in Malaysia, fewer studies have explored how disability is represented within official government policy discourse. This thesis examines how disability is framed in Malaysian federal budget speeches from 2016 to 2026 and what these framings reveal about underlying policy approaches. The study adopts a qualitative discourse analysis informed by social constructionism and framing theory. Malaysian federal budget speeches were analysed as key policy texts that communicate government priorities and justify public expenditure decisions. Disability-related references were coded to identify recurring policy frames. Six dominant frames were identified: welfare and protection; accessibility and service access; symbolic recognition; education and developmental support; employment and economic participation; and care and rehabilitation support. The findings show that disability is frequently positioned within broader narratives of vulnerable populations, social welfare programmes, and national development. While some references reflect elements of the social model of disability, welfare-oriented narratives remain prominent. Importantly, the findings highlight a gap between rights-based policy commitments and their implementation, with disability governance remaining largely programme-based and lacking strong enforcement mechanisms. Overall, this study demonstrates how disability is positioned within Malaysian policy discourse and contributes to broader discussions on disability policy and governance.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated

to my cousins—Nate, Ephraim, Gwen, Anna, and Thea;

to Abrianna and Ryan, their mothers, Ms Teoanna and Ms Yung Hwa, and their families;

to the Malaysian OKU community;

and to my fellow Malaysians—past, present, and future.

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List of Abbreviations

11MP — 11th Malaysia Plan

Act 685 — Persons with Disabilities Act 2008

BMF — Biwako Millennium Framework for Action

CRPD — Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DOSM — Department of Statistics Malaysia

HRD Corp — Human Resource Development Corporation

JKM — *Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat* (Malay: Department of Social Welfare)

KPWKM — *Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat* (Malay: Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development)

MKBOKU — *Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Orang Kurang Upaya* (Malay: National Council for Persons with Disabilities)

NGOs — Non-Governmental Organisations

OKU — *Orang Kurang Upaya* (Malay: Persons with Disabilities)

PTOKU — *Pelan Tindakan OKU 2016-2022* (Malay: Malaysia's Action Plan for People with Disabilities 2016-2022)

PWDs — Persons with Disabilities

UN — United Nations

UNESCAP — United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNICEF — United Nations Children's Fund

WHO — World Health Organization

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by outlining its background, rationale, research question, and significance. It situates disability as a global policy issue, discusses the shift towards rights-based approaches, and introduces Malaysia as the case study. The chapter then presents the research question and explains the study's focus on analysing disability in Malaysian federal budget speeches. Finally, it outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background and Rationale

Disability is a major social and policy concern worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that about 1.3 billion people, or roughly 16% of the global population, live with some form of significant disability (WHO, 2022). Despite the scale of this population, persons with disabilities (PWDs) still face exclusion in education, employment, public life, and political participation, making disability not just a matter of welfare or health, but also one of equality, rights, and inclusion (WHO, 2022).

To address these inequalities, disability advocates have campaigned since the 1980s for more inclusive policies and practices informed by the social model of disability and human rights approaches. Deficit-focused models, such as the charity or welfare model of disability, typically frame PWDs as recipients of care, assistance, or protection, often emphasising dependency and social support (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). Similarly, the medical model views disability as an individual condition requiring diagnosis, treatment, or rehabilitation (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024; Chapman, 2020). In contrast, the social model of disability emphasises that disability arises from barriers within society—such as inaccessible environments, discriminatory attitudes, and

institutional structures—rather than from impairments alone and therefore calls for structural changes to enable full participation (Oliver, 1990, as cited in Chapman, 2020; Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024).

Internationally, disability policy has progressively moved away from approaches that view PWDs primarily as objects of charity, care, or medical treatment. Instead, policies have incorporated perspectives informed by the social model of disability and human rights approaches. For example, the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006 marked a significant turning point by recognising PWDs as rights-holders entitled to dignity, participation, and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024). Similar rights-based legislative frameworks have been adopted in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equality Act 2010, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, which prohibit disability-based discrimination and promote equal participation across key areas of public life (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020; People with Disability Australia, 2022; US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2025).

However, as this thesis will demonstrate, rights-based frameworks do not necessarily ensure that these commitments are consistently put into practice in national policy contexts, with Malaysia offering an instructive case for analysing this issue. Malaysia is a federal constitutional monarchy in Southeast Asia, characterised by a multi-ethnic and multicultural population comprising three major ethnic groups—Malays, Chinese, and Indians—as well as diverse indigenous communities across Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia (Andaya & Andaya, 2017). This demographic diversity is shaped by Malaysia's historical and political development

and has influenced the organisation of its social and policy systems. Its governance structure involves both federal and state-level responsibilities, which shape how social policies are developed and implemented across different regions (Ashray, 2017; 2018). Malaysia's social welfare and disability governance systems have evolved within a broader welfare-oriented framework, in which policy development and implementation are shaped by both centralised planning and regional variation in capacity and service delivery (Ong, 2002; Jaafar, 2025).

In keeping with international policy developments, Malaysia ratified the CRPD and passed the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 [Act 685]. Consequently, a range of policies and action plans have been introduced to support disability inclusion, often drawing on principles of participation, accessibility, and social development. However, disability scholars and advocates still observe substantial gaps between official commitments and actual experiences (Islam, 2015; Abdullah et al., 2017; Amar-Singh et al., 2021). For instance, Islam (2015) states that disability in Malaysia has traditionally been seen more as a welfare or charity-based concern than as a matter of rights and social inclusion. Likewise, Abdullah et al. (2017) argue that Act 685 mainly “promotes” the protection of disability rights rather than providing enforceable safeguards. Research from the OKU Rights Matter Project further indicates that barriers in education, accessibility, and employment remain despite disability laws and policies (Amar-Singh et al., 2021).

To better understand the gap identified in the literature, this thesis is guided by the following research question: How is disability framed in Malaysian federal budget speeches, and what do these framings reveal about the underlying policy approaches to disability in Malaysia?

To answer this question, the thesis examines disability-related references in Malaysian federal budget speeches from 2016 to 2026 using a qualitative approach informed by social

constructionism, discourse analysis, and framing. By treating budget speeches as policy texts rather than neutral fiscal summaries, the study explores how language shapes official understandings of disability and how these understandings relate to broader policy approaches.

This study is important because it examines this broader tension through the lens of policy discourse. Instead of only considering whether disability policies exist on paper or are put into practice, this thesis investigates how disability is portrayed in one of the government's most crucial annual policy texts: the federal budget speech. Budget speeches are significant because they communicate the state's priorities, justify public expenditure, and indicate how specific social issues are positioned within national development agendas. Analysing how disability is portrayed in these speeches, therefore, provides insight into how the Malaysian state conceptualises disability and which policy responses are prioritised.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 presents the methodology of the thesis, outlining the study's social constructionist approach and explaining the use of discourse analysis and framing as the main analytical tools. It also describes the dataset, which consists of Malaysian federal budget speeches from 2016 to 2026, and details the coding process used to identify recurring disability frames. Chapter 3 reviews and presents literature on models of disability, disability rights and global policy developments, as well as disability and social exclusion. It establishes the conceptual and policy background needed to understand how disability is framed in official discourse. Chapter 4 describes the history of and current disability policy in Malaysia. Chapter 5 presents the analysis results. It identifies six recurring frames through which disability is represented in the budget speeches: welfare and protection; accessibility and service access;

symbolic recognition; education and developmental support; employment and economic participation; and care and rehabilitation support. Chapter 6 interprets these findings in relation to the literature and models of disability discussed earlier in the thesis. It examines what the identified frames reveal about the coexistence of narratives on welfare, accessibility, development, and economic participation within Malaysian disability policy discourse. Chapter 7 restates the research question, summarises the study's key findings, reflects on its contribution to disability policy scholarship, and outlines limitations and directions for future research.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework and methodological approach used in the study. It begins by explaining the importance of social constructionism in analysing disability policy discourse, then covers discourse analysis and framing as analytical tools. The chapter also describes the dataset used, which includes Malaysian federal budget speeches from 2016 to 2026, and concludes by detailing the coding process for identifying common disability frames.

2.1 Social Constructionism and Disability

This thesis employs social constructionism to examine how disability is defined and depicted in policy discourse. Social constructionist perspectives emphasise that social categories are not neutral or purely objective descriptions of reality but are shaped by history, cultural norms, and institutional practices (Burr & Dick, 2017). Rather than assuming that social phenomena exist independently of social interpretation, social constructionism underscores that meanings are created through social interaction and shared understanding (Burr & Dick, 2017).

From this perspective, concepts such as disability are not solely biological categories but are shaped by the meanings that societies assign to bodily difference. Disability scholars have emphasised how ideas about normality and bodily difference are socially constructed within specific historical contexts. Davis (1995) argues that the concept of the “normal body” arose alongside the development of statistical thinking in the 19th century, particularly through the use of the bell curve. Through this statistical framework, most of the population came to be defined as “normal,” while individuals whose bodies or abilities fell outside this range were categorised as deviations from the norm (Davis, 1995).

These historical ideas of normality still shape modern views of disability. Disability studies scholars observe that the classification of bodily differences as pathological often mirrors wider social values rather than objective biological facts. Chapman (2020) maintains that concepts like dysfunction and harm, which are commonly used to support the medicalisation of disability, lack clear or universally accepted definitions. Consequently, behaviours or bodily characteristics that deviate from dominant social norms might be labelled as dysfunctional even if they do not harm the individual (Chapman, 2020).

Understanding disability as socially constructed shifts focus away from purely individual explanations and towards the broader social contexts that define and govern disability. This view aligns with the social model of disability, which differentiates between impairment and disability and contends that disability results from societal barriers rather than impairments themselves (Oliver, 1990, as cited in Chapman, 2020). Social, environmental, and attitudinal barriers can hinder people with impairments from fully participating in society, thus creating disability through exclusionary structures (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024).

Viewing disability through a social constructionist perspective offers a vital foundation for analysing policy discourse. If disability categories and meanings are shaped by social processes, then political language and policy documents serve as key sites where disability is defined, interpreted, and governed.

2.2 Discourse and Policy Analysis

Building on this social constructionist perspective, this thesis employs discourse analysis to explore how disability is depicted in Malaysian policy discourse. Discourse analysis examines

how language constructs social realities, shapes public understanding of issues, and influences political decision-making.

Policy documents and political speeches are not neutral descriptions of social conditions but serve as forms of political communication through which governments identify problems, justify policy responses, and signal priorities to the public and other stakeholders (Grue, 2011). The language employed in policy texts, therefore, plays a significant role in shaping how social issues are perceived and addressed.

Disability scholars have emphasised the importance of analysing discourse when studying disability policy. Grue (2011) argues that historically, people with impairments have often been treated as objects of intervention—whether through charity, institutionalisation, or medical treatment—rather than as agents in their own right. In many policy and institutional settings, PWDs have therefore been positioned as recipients of care or assistance rather than as individuals with rights and political voice (Grue, 2011).

Analysing discourse enables researchers to uncover the assumptions embedded in policy language and explore how various understandings of disability are perpetuated through political communication. For instance, disability might be framed as a medical problem requiring treatment, a welfare issue requiring financial support, or a human rights concern demanding structural reform (Retief & Letšosa, 2018; Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024). Each framing reflects distinct underlying assumptions about disability and suggests different policy approaches.

This thesis employs discourse analysis to investigate how disability is depicted in Malaysian federal budget speeches. Budget speeches are especially important policy documents because they set out government priorities, justify public expenditure decisions, and communicate policy agendas to the public (Miller & Rose, 1990, as cited in Ferry et al., 2014).

This analytical approach addresses the research question guiding this thesis: How is disability framed in Malaysian federal budget speeches, and what do these framings reveal about the underlying policy approaches to disability in Malaysia?

2.3 Framing in Policy Discourse

To analyse the discursive construction of disability in policy texts, this study employs frame theory. Framing refers to how issues are presented and interpreted in policy debates. Instead of describing reality objectively, policy actors emphasise certain aspects of an issue while omitting or minimising others, thereby influencing how the issue is understood (van Hulst et al., 2025).

Framing plays several crucial roles in policy discourse. It highlights certain aspects of an issue while omitting others, sets boundaries around the topic under discussion, and guides attention towards specific elements while relegating others to the background (Dewulf et al., 2011, as cited in van Hulst et al., 2025). Through these processes, different actors can develop varied interpretations of the same policy problem depending on the aspects they emphasise (Dewulf et al., 2013, as cited in van Hulst et al., 2025).

Framing also influences policy responses because how a problem is defined shapes which solutions seem suitable. Schön and Rein (1994) argue that framing allows policymakers to shift from describing a situation (“what is”) to suggesting a course of action (“what ought to be”). By defining the nature of a policy issue, frames shape the direction of policy debates and the kinds of solutions considered legitimate.

Policy framing can also be employed strategically. Political actors might emphasise certain aspects of an issue or establish specific reference points to influence others’ interpretation

of the situation (Benford & Snow, 2000). When multiple actors seek to shape how an issue is framed, competing interpretations or frame contests may arise (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Within disability policy, framing shapes whether disability is seen mainly as a medical condition, a welfare issue, a social problem, or a human rights concern. These frames highlight different aspects of disability and suggest distinct responsibilities for the state and society.

2.4 Research Approach

Building on the theoretical perspectives outlined above, this study examines how disability is framed within Malaysian federal budget speeches. Budget speeches are official government statements presented annually to Parliament that detail fiscal priorities, policy initiatives, and government expenditure plans (Ferry et al., 2014; Rajandran, 2019; Rashid Ali & Awab, 2023). Because they communicate policy priorities and justify public spending, these speeches serve as an important source for analysing how governments formulate and communicate policy agendas (Ferry et al., 2014; Rajandran, 2019; Rashid Ali & Awab, 2023).

The dataset for this study includes Malaysian federal budget speeches delivered from 2016 to 2026. These speeches were chosen because they mention policies, programmes, or allocations related to disability. Analysing these references allows examination of how disability is presented in national policy discourse over time.

The analysis was conducted through qualitative coding of disability-related excerpts within the speeches. During coding, excerpts were categorised based on recurring policy frames identified in the dataset. Six frames emerged from the analysis:

- Welfare / Protection
- Accessibility and Service Access

- Symbolic Recognition
- Education and Developmental Support
- Employment and Economic Participation
- Care and Rehabilitation Support

These frames illustrate the various ways disability is portrayed within policy discourse. While the coding categories reflect empirical patterns observed in the speeches, their interpretation is guided by the disability models discussed in the literature review. Analysing how these frames appear across different speeches enables the identification of patterns in the construction of disability within Malaysian policy discourse.

Together, these conceptual frameworks and policy discussions emphasise the complex ways disability is understood across social, political, and institutional contexts. This methodological approach provides the basis for analysing how disability is framed within Malaysian policy discourse, which is examined through the literature review and policy contexts detailed in the following chapters.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on disability as a social, political, and policy issue. It begins by examining major conceptual models of disability, including the medical, charity, social, and human rights models. It then discusses global developments in disability rights, particularly the emergence of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The chapter also explores the relationship among disability, social exclusion, and structural inequality, and then examines disability policy developments in Malaysia. Together, this literature provides the conceptual and contextual foundation for analysing how disability is framed within Malaysian federal budget speeches.

3.1 Conceptualising Disability

Disability is widely recognised as a major global social issue affecting a large proportion of the world's population. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that about 1.3 billion people—around 16% of the world's population—experience some form of significant disability (WHO, 2022). Of these, approximately 124 million individuals have severe levels of disability (WHO, 2022). Although nearly 80% of PWDs live in low- and middle-income countries, disability prevalence seems higher in high-income countries due to better diagnostic systems and less underreporting (WHO, 2022). These figures underscore the importance of disability as both a social and policy issue across different national contexts.

Understanding disability involves examining how societies interpret bodily differences and notions of normality. Davis (1995) contends that recognising the disabled body begins with understanding the concept of the norm, highlighting that the issue lies not with individuals with

disabilities but with how normality itself is constructed. According to Davis (1995), the idea of the “normal body” arose through statistical thinking, especially through the use of the bell curve, which grouped the majority of the population as the “norm” and identified those outside this range as deviations. This statistical perspective on the human body helped establish disability as an abnormality or deviance from a perceived standard (Davis, 1995). Early statisticians were often influenced by eugenic ideas, which supported the belief that deviations from the norm—including disability—should be corrected or eradicated (Davis, 1995).

These historical notions of normality have significantly influenced current views on disability. Disability studies scholars contend that disability is frequently understood through medicalised frameworks that treat bodily differences as a pathology in need of treatment or correction. Medicalisation is the process by which human experiences are primarily interpreted via medical discourse, framing bodily differences as subjects of scientific inquiry and potential intervention (Couser, 2011). When disability is viewed exclusively through medical language, it becomes individualised as a biological issue centred within the disabled person’s body rather than within wider social structures.

This individualised understanding closely aligns with the medical model of disability, which conceptualises disability as a disease or abnormal condition requiring medical intervention. The medical model suggests that disability can be addressed through diagnostic tools that detect pathology and lead to medical or personalised treatments aimed at curing or alleviating the condition (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024). From this perspective, disability is often depicted as a personal tragedy affecting both the individual and their family, with medical intervention being the primary response (Chapman, 2020). Chapman (2020) observes that this

model functions both as an ideological perspective shaping social attitudes and policies and as a theoretical framework that defines disability as a medical pathology.

Critics argue that the medical model's reliance on concepts such as dysfunction and harm is problematic because these concepts lack universally accepted definitions, even within medical contexts (Chapman, 2020). As a result, what is considered dysfunctional or harmful is often shaped by social norms and cultural expectations rather than objective criteria (Chapman, 2020). This ambiguity permits minority ways of functioning to be unnecessarily pathologised (Chapman, 2020).

Alongside the medical model, disability has also traditionally been understood through the charity model, which depicts PWDs as victims of unfortunate circumstances deserving pity and benevolence (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). Within this framework, PWDs are often regarded as reliant on the assistance of able-bodied individuals and receive special services or institutional care (Duyan, 2007, as cited in Retief & Letšosa, 2018). Although the charity model promotes humane treatment, it also perpetuates stereotypes that portray PWDs as helpless and dependent (Seale, 2006, as cited in Retief & Letšosa, 2018).

In response to these individualised frameworks, disability scholars and activists developed the social model of disability, which fundamentally redefines disability as a socially constructed phenomenon. The social model differentiates between impairment and disability, arguing that disability results not from a person's physical or cognitive differences but from the organisation of society (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024). According to this model, social, economic, and environmental barriers prevent individuals with impairments from fully engaging in society (Oliver, 1990, as cited in Chapman, 2020). The social model, therefore, shifts the focus away from personal limitations and towards structural inequalities embedded in social systems.

The social model originated from the disabled people's movement and has significantly influenced disability rights activism and policy change (Lawson & Wazakili, 2024). It is described as a practical guide for attaining disability rights by pinpointing barriers that can be addressed through political and social transformation (Lawson & Wazakili, 2024). Nonetheless, the model has been criticised for not sufficiently considering the embodied experiences of impairment, including pain and physical restrictions (Mulvany, 2000). Therefore, some scholars argue that disability should be understood as the interaction between embodied impairments and social environments, recognising that both bodily experiences and social barriers influence how disability is experienced (Mulvany, 2000).

Building on the social model, the human rights model of disability has become increasingly important in international disability policy. The human rights model stresses the innate dignity of PWDs and views disability mainly as a matter of rights and equality (Quinn & Degener, 2002, as cited in Lawson & Beckett, 2021). Rather than focusing on disability itself, this model provides guidance on policy actions to promote equal participation in society (Lawson & Beckett, 2021). While some scholars argue that the human rights model improves upon the social model, others view the two as complementary (Lawson & Beckett, 2021).

These conceptual developments have been accompanied by wider shifts in critical disability scholarship. For example, the idea of neurodiversity highlights the natural variation in human neurocognitive functioning, drawing parallels with biological diversity in non-human species (Wilson, 1985, as cited in Stenning & Bertilsdotter Rosqvist, 2021). In this view, individuals whose cognitive functioning differs from mainstream norms may identify as neurodivergent, reclaiming diagnostic labels as part of an identity that justifies demands for resources, recognition, and representation (Stenning & Bertilsdotter Rosqvist, 2021). However,

scholars warn that the concept of neurodivergence may hide differences among individuals with diverse neurological conditions and experiences (Stenning & Bertilsdotter Rosqvist, 2021).

Taken together, these models demonstrate that disability is not just a medical or biological phenomenon, but a complex concept shaped by social norms, institutional structures, and political struggles over rights and recognition.

3.2 Disability Rights and Global Policy Developments

Disability rights movements have significantly shaped global perceptions of disability and driven policy changes. A major aim of disabled people's movements worldwide has been to attain civil rights protections at both national and international levels. These efforts led to the adoption of the CRPD in 2006, which came into effect in 2008.

The CRPD emerged from extensive collaboration between disability advocacy organisations and UN member states over several years of negotiations (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024). It also became one of the most rapidly ratified human rights instruments in history, with 160 states signing the Convention on its opening day in 2007 and 126 states ratifying it within five years (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024). By April 2026, the Convention had been ratified by 177 countries, reflecting a widespread international commitment to promoting the rights of PWDs (International Disability Alliance, n.d.).

The CRPD marks a significant change in how disability is viewed within international policy. Rather than viewing disability as a social welfare issue, the Convention recognises PWDs as rights-holders entitled to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024). Article 1 of the CRPD describes PWDs as individuals with long-term impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may obstruct their full and effective

participation in society on an equal basis with others (Buettgen & Zubrow, 2024). This definition highlights the influence of the social model of disability by emphasising the interaction between impairments and social barriers.

The CRPD also emphasises participation and agency, reflecting the disability movement's slogan "nothing about us without us." This principle highlights that PWDs should be directly involved in decisions impacting their lives, rather than having policies crafted solely by non-disabled experts. User involvement and co-production in policy and service design are thus regarded as vital mechanisms to ensure that disability policies genuinely reflect the lived experiences of those they affect.

Despite widespread ratification of the CRPD, implementation varies unevenly across countries. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is tasked with monitoring states' compliance by reviewing reports submitted by signatory nations and offering recommendations to align national laws with the Convention. Nonetheless, ensuring that countries move beyond symbolic gestures to meaningful action remains a constant challenge in international disability policy.

3.3 Disability, Social Exclusion, and Structural Inequality

Beyond legal and policy frameworks, scholars have also emphasised the connection between disability and wider processes of social exclusion. Disability is shaped not only by physical impairments but also by social structures that limit access to education, employment, public spaces, and political participation.

Industrialisation and the rise of capitalist economies have significantly shaped social understandings of disability. In capitalist societies, individuals are expected to contribute

economically through productive labour, and bodies that cannot meet these expectations are often viewed as abnormal or problematic (Davis, 1995). This focus on productivity reinforces social hierarchies where individuals are valued based on their ability to participate in the labour market.

Disability scholars argue that such economic structures reinforce processes of disablement by prioritising independence, rationality, and productivity as signs of social worth (Davis, 1995). When these ideals are ingrained in social institutions, disability may be viewed as a personal limitation rather than as evidence of structural exclusion within workplaces and economic systems.

Social exclusion is also influenced by wider patterns of inequality and discrimination. Mulvany (2000) notes that mental health policies often assume that the main difficulties faced by individuals with psychiatric disabilities arise from their medical conditions, ignoring the impact of poverty, inequality, and discrimination on their experiences. Focusing only on medical symptoms can therefore hide the broader social factors that affect disability outcomes.

Disability studies scholars such as Grue (2011) also emphasise the importance of analysing language and discourse when examining disability. Grue (2011) contends that throughout history, individuals with impairments have frequently been viewed as objects of intervention—whether through charity, institutionalisation, or medical treatment—rather than as active agents of social change. Therefore, disability studies aim to expose the discourses that construct disability as a category associated with abnormality, dependency, or unemployability (Grue, 2011).

Since the late 20th century, scholars have increasingly emphasised that disability results from the interaction between social structures, institutional practices, and cultural attitudes.

Analysing disability within its broader social context, therefore, requires examining not only policies and institutions but also the discursive frameworks through which disability is understood. This highlights the importance of scrutinising policy discourse, as language shapes how disability is interpreted within governance frameworks. The following chapter outlines the policy context in Malaysia to set the stage for the analysis of the budget speeches presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 – Disability Policy and Governance in Malaysia

This chapter examines the historical development, contemporary policy framework, governance structures, and implementation challenges of disability policy in Malaysia. It traces how disability governance has evolved from welfare- and institution-based approaches to more recent policy efforts that incorporate elements of inclusion and rights-based discourse. By situating disability policy within broader social welfare and governance systems, this chapter provides the necessary context for understanding how disability is framed within Malaysian policy discourse, as reflected in the six frames identified in the subsequent analysis.

4.1 Historical Foundations of Disability Governance

Disability governance in Malaysia has historically been embedded within welfare and institutional care systems. According to Jayasooria and Ooi (1994), organised responses to disability in pre-independence Malaya emerged in the early 20th century through voluntary initiatives, primarily led by Christian missionary organisations, including residential institutions for blind, disabled, and orphaned individuals. These efforts framed disability largely as a matter of charity and custodial care rather than social participation or rights.

Following World War II, the British colonial administration began to take a more active role in disability-related welfare through the establishment of the Department of Social Welfare in 1946, tasked with the “care of the crippled, blind and feeble-minded” (Department of Social Welfare, 1946; as cited in Jayasooria & Ooi, 1994). Institutional and custodial care dominated this period, and PWDs were largely segregated from mainstream society and excluded from decision-making processes (Jayasooria, 1996).

Jayasooria (1996) identifies three overlapping phases in the development of disability services in Malaysia: institutional care (1940s–1960s), the emergence of self-help organisations (1960s–1980s), and the introduction of community-based rehabilitation centres (CBRs) from the 1980s onward. Importantly, these phases did not replace one another; rather, elements of institutional, welfare, and community-based approaches continue to coexist within Malaysia’s disability policy framework. These phases broadly reflect a shift from charity- and medically oriented approaches to more community-based and socially oriented understandings of disability, although earlier welfare-oriented practices persist.

Malaysia’s broader social welfare system has similarly evolved through phases of state-led development, market-oriented reform, and more recent hybrid approaches combining economic and targeted welfare policies (Jaafar, 2025). These broader shifts overlap with the development of disability services identified by Jayasooria (1996), where institutional, welfare, and community-based approaches continue to coexist within contemporary disability governance.

4.2 Contemporary Disability Policy Framework

In Malaysia, disability policy has evolved within a complex institutional and political framework. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), there were 805,509 registered PWDs in 2024, accounting for roughly 2.4% of the national population (DOSM, 2025). However, disability scholars and advocates warn that these figures probably underestimate the actual number of PWDs because disability registration in Malaysia is voluntary, and records are not consistently updated (Islam, 2015).

Survey data also indicate that the prevalence of disability may be significantly higher. The 2019 National Health and Morbidity Survey reported that 11.1% of Malaysian adults experience some form of disability, while approximately 4.7% of Malaysian children have at least one functional difficulty (OKU Rights Matter, 2023). These figures emphasise the gap between official registration statistics and broader population-level estimates of disability.

Malaysia's disability policy framework has previously encompassed various national policies and programmes that support PWDs. These include the National Welfare Policy 1990, the National Social Policy 2003, the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2007, and the National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities 2007-2012 (Islam, 2015), with the most recent disability policy being the *Pelan Tindakan OKU 2016-2022*. Although these initiatives are in place, scholars argue that disability has historically been seen more as a welfare issue than a matter of rights and social inclusion (Noor, 2025).

Several national policies on social welfare and social services have been introduced in Malaysia, with some provisions targeted toward the disability community. While Malaysia's policies and programmes have aimed at addressing the needs of vulnerable groups (such as PWDs and the elderly), they have mostly been integrated into broader social welfare development (Ong, 2002; UNICEF Malaysia, 2019).

The objective of the National Welfare Policy 1990 was to create a stable and secure society, promote self-reliance, ensure equal opportunities, foster mutual assistance, and support the development of a caring culture (Islam, 2015; Mahyut & Amiruddin, 2019). While the 1990 policy recognised the importance of caring for specific groups, such as the elderly and PWDs, it also encouraged—and expected—families and communities to continue supporting these groups, emphasising that institutional assistance should be a last resort (Ong, 2002).

On the other hand, the National Social Policy 2003 was a social development initiative rooted in core principles of promoting high moral values and enhancing human capacity, with the aim of fostering unity and social stability while strengthening national resilience (Sufeena et al., 2022). Regarding PWDs, the 2003 policy sought to promote equal rights and full participation in Malaysian society (Mahyut & Amiruddin, 2019), outlining 15 key focus areas: accessibility, advocacy, education, employment, health, housing, human resources, participation, personal safety, rehabilitation, research development, social development, social protection, support services, and women and children with disabilities (Islam, 2015; Khalid & Yusof, 2017). The policy also broadly emphasised participation and inclusion across all levels of society, with an expectation that individuals, families and communities—including PWDs—would actively contribute to national development and the achievement of well-being (Wahab et al., 2016).

Building on the broader social development framework established by the 2003 policy, the National Policy for Persons With Disabilities 2007 was introduced to specifically address issues affecting PWDs. The 2007 policy aimed to promote social integrity, stability, national resilience, and well-being in a progressing and established Malaysian society (Islam, 2015; Mahyut & Amiruddin, 2019). Applying the principle of equality, PWDs were expected to participate fully in society, with the policy outlining strategies across multiple areas related to inclusion and support (Wahab et al., 2016). The 2007 policy detailed national strategies for implementing the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 [Act 685], including approaches related to advocacy, accessibility to facilities, transport services, information and communications technology, health services, rehabilitation programmes, access to education, employment opportunities, personal safety and social protection, capacity building, societal participation in programmes for PWDs, housing, and the development, advancement, and empowerment of

children with disabilities (UNICEF Malaysia, 2014). However, critics noted that the policy lacked full commitment from key stakeholders, as no timelines were set during meetings to discuss policy implementation (UNICEF Malaysia, 2014). Moreover, the policy outcomes were expressed in broad and sweeping terms, with objectives not clearly operationalised and no explicit indication of which departments or individuals would be responsible for achieving each outcome (UNICEF Malaysia, 2014).

The 2007 policy for PWDs was followed by action plans to translate it into programmes and activities implemented through multi-sectoral collaboration (Wahab et al., 2016). The National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities 2007-2012 aimed to raise awareness and foster a positive attitude, establish a barrier-free environment, improve user-friendly transportation, enhance access to information, health services, rehabilitation, education, employment, and salary progression, provide protection from all forms of exploitation, promote capacity development and training, strengthen the capabilities of NGOs, and encourage PWDs' participation in planning and decision-making processes (Islam, 2015).

The latest disability-specific action plan was the *Pelan Tindakan OKU 2016-2022* [PTOKU]. The PTOKU outlined 10 strategies to guide the implementation of disability policy, aligning with both the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific and the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP). The Incheon Strategy, developed under the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), builds on the CRPD and the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (BMF) to promote disability-inclusive development across the region (Tah & Mokhtar, 2017; UNICEF Malaysia, 2014). Through this alignment, the PTOKU reflects Malaysia's broader commitment to advancing disability inclusion within both national and regional policy frameworks. However,

disability advocates have noted that many of the plan's goals remain unmet, with concerns about the absence of parliamentary debate, monitoring, and oversight mechanisms during implementation (SIUMAN Collective, 2024).

4.3 Governance, Service Delivery, and Implementation

In Malaysia, the organisation and delivery of disability services have historically been tied to welfare administration and institutional provision. This reflects a broader orientation towards disability grounded in charity- and medically influenced approaches, where disability is primarily understood in terms of care, rehabilitation, and dependency rather than rights and social participation, with support often delivered through institutional and programme-based mechanisms rather than enforceable entitlements. This is reflected in the Department of Social Welfare (*Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat* [JKM])'s central role and in the positioning of many disability-related services within the broader social welfare and social assistance system. As a result, disability support is largely administered through welfare-based structures, reinforcing the positioning of PWDs as recipients of care rather than as rights-holding citizens.

After Malaysia gained independence in 1957, the Department of Social Welfare, a remnant of the British colonial administration, continued to play a central role in disability governance within the Malaysian state. Since 2004, JKM has operated under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (*Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga, dan Masyarakat* [KPWKM]), serving as the primary administrative channel for disability-related assistance and services.

JKM administers a range of disability-related supports, including registration, cash allowances, rehabilitation services, institutional care, job coaching, and independent living

initiatives (Department of Social Welfare Malaysia, 2026). Disability-related programmes are primarily funded through annual federal government budget allocations and welfare programmes, rather than through legally enforceable entitlements. Social welfare in Malaysia is a shared responsibility between federal and state governments, with federal agencies administering programmes while state governments support implementation and operational costs (Ashray, 2017; 2018). In practice, welfare provision has also relied on the voluntary or “third sector,” including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community organisations, which often fill gaps in service delivery not fully addressed by the state (Ashray, 2017; Ong, 2002).

Jayasooria (1996) draws a useful distinction between policy and legislation for understanding disability governance: policies operate as broad directives open to interpretation and discretionary compliance, whereas legislation implies enforceability and consequences for noncompliance. According to Jayasooria (1996), Malaysia tends to rely on political pronouncements and incentives rather than legal enforcement, as illustrated by employment measures that emphasise hiring incentives rather than penalties for discrimination. This approach, in turn, frames PWDs as dependent on goodwill rather than entitled to enforceable protections as full and equal citizens (Jayasooria, 1996).

4.4 Policy-Implementation Gaps and Structural Constraints

Following its ratification of the CRPD, Malaysia enacted the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 [Act 685] as the country’s primary legislative framework for disability policy, demonstrating its commitment to advancing disability rights. The Act established the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (*Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Orang Kurang Upaya* [MKBOKU]), which is responsible for coordinating and overseeing disability-related policies

(Abdullah et al., 2017). However, scholars have raised concerns about the Act's effectiveness in safeguarding the rights of PWDs (Islam, 2015; Abdullah et al., 2017; Amar-Singh et al., 2021).

Abdullah and colleagues (2017) argue that Act 685 primarily “promotes” disability rights protection rather than provides enforceable safeguards. The Act lacks clear enforcement mechanisms, and references to the Act are uncommon in legal cases involving disability rights violations (Abdullah et al., 2017). Additionally, the Act shields government and public officials from legal action if their actions are taken in “good faith,” a concept not clearly defined in the legislation (Abdullah et al., 2017).

Scholars like Islam (2015) and Wahab and colleagues (2016) have also identified gaps between disability policies and their implementation. For example, the 1% employment quota for PWDs in the civil service, introduced in 1988, has never been fully met (Islam, 2015), despite subsequent government service circulars that outline implementation procedures and monitoring mechanisms (Wahab et al., 2016). As of 2025, only 0.64% of the public sector workforce consisted of PWDs (The Sun Malaysia, 2025). This gap between policy commitments and outcomes reflects broader challenges in implementing disability rights frameworks.

Barriers to disability inclusion persist across education, accessibility, and employment. Research conducted under the OKU Rights Matter Project found that children with disabilities continue to face discrimination and prejudice in mainstream schools due to a lack of accessible infrastructure and accommodations, as well as a general societal lack of awareness of disability and the community's needs (Amar-Singh et al., 2021). Similarly, workers with disabilities often encounter not only discriminatory hiring practices and inaccessible workplaces that limit their ability to participate fully in the labour market, but also harassment and bullying (Amar-Singh et al., 2021).

These barriers are not only structural but also shaped by broader social attitudes and understandings of disability. UNICEF Malaysia (2020) notes that, despite a broadly rights-based legislative framework, disability in Malaysia remains influenced by charity- and medically oriented perspectives, in which PWDs are often positioned as passive recipients of services rather than as individuals with agency. This reflects the persistence of stigmatising social norms and a continued focus on impairment rather than on broader societal barriers to inclusion (UNICEF Malaysia, 2020).

These barriers are also closely linked to broader structural and service delivery challenges, including limitations in infrastructure, policy design, and institutional capacity, which undermine the consistency and effectiveness of implementation across sectors. Implementation challenges are further shaped by Malaysia's federal–state governance structure, in which disparities in capacity, coordination, and understanding of local needs can lead to inconsistencies in service delivery across regions, particularly between Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia.

As a result, these challenges have prompted the disability community, scholars, and advocates to call for reforms to strengthen disability rights protections in Malaysia. Specifically, critics argue that effective disability policies require stronger enforcement mechanisms, greater involvement of PWDs in policymaking, and a shift away from welfare-focused approaches towards rights-based frameworks (Islam, 2015; Abdullah et al., 2017; Amar-Singh et al., 2021).

4.5 Summary and Link to Analysis

Overall, Malaysia's disability policy framework reflects a largely welfare-based, programme-driven system, despite increasing references to inclusion and rights-based

approaches. Disability governance continues to rely heavily on administrative structures, particularly JKM, with support primarily delivered through welfare programmes, service provision, and targeted policy initiatives rather than enforceable legal entitlements.

At the same time, limitations in enforcement, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms contribute to persistent gaps between policy commitments and lived realities. The continued reliance on welfare-oriented structures, combined with structural and implementation constraints, helps explain how disability is framed within Malaysian policy discourse. These dynamics provide important context for the six frames identified in this thesis, particularly the prominence of welfare and protection framing, the programme-based nature of accessibility and service provision, and the emphasis on economic participation over enforceable rights.

Having outlined the disability policy context in Malaysia, the next chapter presents the analysis's findings by examining how disability is framed in Malaysian federal budget speeches.

Chapter 5 – Findings

5.1 Overview of Disability References in Budget Speeches

This chapter presents findings from an analysis of Malaysian federal budget speeches from 2016 to 2026, focusing on how disability is framed within official government policy discourse. Across the analysed speeches, references to PWDs appear across various policy contexts, including welfare assistance, accessibility measures, education initiatives, employment programmes, and care services.

Six recurring policy frames were identified through qualitative analysis of the speeches: Welfare and Protection; Accessibility and Service Access; Symbolic Recognition; Education and Developmental Support; Employment and Economic Participation; and Care and Rehabilitation Support. These frames show how disability is depicted in the speeches and the policy measures associated with disability-related initiatives. Recognising these frames helps address the research question by exposing how disability is constructed within Malaysian policy discourse and which policy responses are highlighted.

Throughout the dataset, disability is often mentioned alongside broader discussions of vulnerable or marginalised groups, such as senior citizens, children, low-income households, and other socially disadvantaged communities. While the speeches cover various policy initiatives aimed at PWDs, the framing of disability frequently situates these measures within wider social welfare or development programmes rather than treating disability policy as a separate policy area.

The sections below analyse each of the six frames identified in the analysis and demonstrate how disability is portrayed within the speeches.

5.2 Welfare and Protection

One of the most common ways disability appears in Malaysian budget speeches is through a welfare and protection frame. In this framing, PWDs are discussed alongside other groups considered socially vulnerable, such as the elderly, children, and low-income households. Disability-related measures are often introduced within broader social protection programmes that support vulnerable communities.

For example, the Budget 2016 speech places disability support within a broader social assistance framework:

“The Government will continue to strengthen the social safety net system with an allocation of almost RM2 billion to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to assist PWD, the elderly and poor families.” (Razak, 2015)

Here, PWDs are mentioned alongside other groups receiving welfare support, placing disability within the wider context of social protection policies.

A similar framing is present in the Budget 2017 speech, which emphasises government protection of vulnerable populations:

“The Government continues to protect the vulnerable groups. [...] A sum of RM535 million is provided to the persons with disabilities (PWDs)...” (Razak, 2016)

This language emphasises disability policy as part of a broader commitment to safeguarding vulnerable groups, rather than as a separate policy area with specialised governance structures.

Subsequent speeches continue to employ a similar framing. For example, the Budget 2021 speech mentions financial assistance programmes aimed at supporting vulnerable communities:

“To enhance the welfare of vulnerable groups, the Government has agreed to increase the monthly rate of financial assistance...” (Aziz, 2020)

Disability also features in the Department of Social Welfare’s broader welfare assistance programmes. The Budget 2024 speech, for example, states:

“The assistance is expected to benefit more than 450,000 rakyat, especially hardcore poor households, senior citizens, children and the disabled.” (Ibrahim, 2023)

Across these speeches, disability-related measures are therefore consistently framed within broader welfare protection and social assistance programmes.

5.3 Accessibility and Service Access

A second recurring frame concerns accessibility and service access, in which disability is discussed in relation to infrastructure, services, or public facilities designed to accommodate PWDs.

Several speeches emphasise measures to enhance accessibility in public spaces and services. For instance, the Budget 2017 speech introduces tax relief for assistive equipment:

“GST relief for the purchase of aid equipment for registered PWDs... The list of equipment eligible for tax relief will be expanded.” (Razak, 2016)

Here, disability is addressed through financial mechanisms that support access to assistive technology.

Accessibility measures also extend to educational infrastructure. The Budget 2020 speech states:

“The Government will further allocate RM23 million to ensure that these school facilities are disabled friendly... whereby no disabled child shall be denied an education due to his or her disability.” (Lim, 2019)

This reference links accessibility improvements to the Ministry of Education’s Zero Reject Policy, which emphasises inclusive access to education.

Other measures concentrate on enhancing accessibility in public services and communication. For instance, the Budget 2022 speech states:

“All TV networks, including private channels, will soon ensure sign language interpreters for their news programmes.” (Aziz, 2021)

Similarly, transport accessibility is mentioned in the Budget 2026 speech, which states:

“Complimentary MyRailLife passes for train services to PWDs...” (Ibrahim, 2025)

These examples illustrate that accessibility is primarily framed in terms of infrastructure improvements, transport access, communication services, and assistive technologies.

5.4 Symbolic Recognition

A third frame identified in the analysis involves symbolic recognition, where PWDs are mentioned in celebratory or inspirational contexts rather than through specific policy initiatives.

One notable example is found in the Budget 2017 speech, which emphasises the achievements of Malaysian Paralympic athletes:

“PWD brings broader meaning. They have special and exceptional abilities as they have proven themselves as world-class sports heroes.” (Razak, 2016)

The same speech also commends the achievements of athletes in the Rio Paralympic Games:

“We have invited four of our 2016 Rio Paralympic athletes who have won three Gold medals and one Bronze medal.” (Razak, 2016)

Later speeches continue to acknowledge disability through sporting achievements. The Budget 2022 speech, for example, refers to Malaysia's success at the Tokyo Paralympics:

“The song Negaraku, which resounded in Tokyo recently, marked the success of our athletes in winning gold at the recent Paralympic Games.” (Aziz, 2021)

In these examples, disability is framed through narratives of achievement and national pride rather than through structural policy reforms.

5.5 Education and Developmental Support

Disability also features in speeches concerning education and developmental support, especially for children with developmental disabilities.

Several speeches mention investments in education infrastructure and support services for students with special needs. For example, the Budget 2018 speech allocates funding for early education programmes:

“RM654 million is allocated for the construction of four pre-schools, nine PERMATA centres, including two new centres for autistic children.” (Razak, 2017)

Recent speeches continue to emphasise initiatives aimed at children with developmental disabilities. The Budget 2023 speech introduces expanded tax relief for intervention services:

“The scope of this relief will also be expanded to cover the cost of intervention treatment for children with developmental disabilities such as Autism, Down Syndrome, and Specific Learning Disabilities.” (Ibrahim, 2023)

Similarly, the Budget 2025 speech highlights early education programmes for autistic children:

“Establishing 11 new PERMATA Centres across various states to uplift the early education of autistic children.” (Ibrahim, 2024)

These initiatives demonstrate how disability policy in budget speeches often emphasises developmental support and educational access for children.

5.6 Employment and Economic Participation

Another important theme highlighted in the speeches concerns employment and economic participation. In these cases, disability is examined in relation to labour market involvement, skills enhancement, and income generation.

For example, the Budget 2021 speech includes incentives for employers to employ PWDs:

“To encourage employment for the disabled... employers will be given an additional incentive.” (Aziz, 2020)

Similarly, the Budget 2022 speech outlines incentives for hiring aimed at specific groups:

“The Government will provide a hiring incentive... to encourage employers to provide employment opportunities for People with Disabilities.” (Aziz, 2021)

Later speeches also emphasise training and skill development programmes. The Budget 2024 speech, for instance, refers to training opportunities for vulnerable groups:

“HRD Corp will reallocate a special fund... to implement talent retention and skill improvement programmes for vulnerable groups such as the disabled.” (Ibrahim, 2023)

Some speeches also feature narrative examples of entrepreneurship among individuals with disabilities. The Budget 2025 speech highlights the success of a programme participant:

“Normaladiana Mohd Yazal, who is physically disabled (OKU)... successfully doubled their family’s income.” (Ibrahim, 2024)

These examples show that disability is more frequently mentioned in discussions of economic participation and workforce inclusion.

5.7 Care and Rehabilitation Support

Finally, disability is also framed in relation to care and rehabilitation services, especially programmes offering training, rehabilitation, or institutional support.

For instance, the Budget 2020 speech emphasises government support for welfare institutions and learning centres:

“An allocation of RM20 million for five new Independent Learning Centres, Down Syndrome training and TASKA for the disabled.” (Lim, 2019)

Later speeches continue to emphasise rehabilitation services. The Budget 2022 speech states:

“RM10 million is also allocated to Independent Living Centres and the Government Industrial Training and Rehabilitation Centre to implement training and mentoring programmes for the disabled.” (Aziz, 2021)

Community rehabilitation programmes are also mentioned in the Budget 2024 speech:

“The OKU Community Rehabilitation Programme.” (Ibrahim, 2023)

These references demonstrate that disability policy is often discussed in terms of care services and rehabilitation programmes that promote skill development and independent living.

5.8 Summary of Key Findings

The findings of this study show that disability is mentioned in Malaysian budget speeches across various policy areas. However, the way disability is framed in these speeches often places

disability-related initiatives within broader policy narratives related to vulnerable groups, social assistance programmes, or national development efforts.

One of the most notable findings is the ongoing use of welfare and protection narratives when referring to PWDs. In various budget speeches, measures related to disability are introduced alongside policies supporting other socially vulnerable groups, including senior citizens, children, and low-income households. This pattern indicates that disability policy continues to be strongly linked with social protection programmes managed through welfare institutions.

At the same time, the speeches also reference accessibility initiatives, particularly infrastructure, educational facilities, and communication services. Examples include tax relief for assistive equipment, the introduction of sign language interpretation in television news programmes, and the development of disabled-friendly school facilities. These initiatives reflect efforts to remove barriers that may restrict participation for PWDs.

The analysis also revealed an increase in references to employment and economic participation, especially through hiring incentives, training programmes, and initiatives to support labour market inclusion. These measures indicate that disability policy discourse increasingly emphasises economic participation and workforce inclusion as part of broader national development strategies.

Additionally, the speeches feature symbolic recognition, particularly through references to Malaysian Paralympic athletes' accomplishments or inspiring stories about PWDs. While these portrayals emphasise positive achievements, they also show how disability can be symbolically invoked in political discourse.

Finally, the speeches refer to education and developmental support, as well as care and rehabilitation services, especially programmes for children with developmental disabilities and institutional support systems provided by welfare agencies and rehabilitation centres.

Together, these findings show that disability policy in Malaysian budget speeches is framed through a mix of welfare support, accessibility initiatives, economic participation programmes, and care services. While some references focus on welfare protection, others emphasise accessibility initiatives, education programmes, or economic participation. However, disability is often discussed within broader policy debates on vulnerable groups, social development, or national achievements rather than as a separate policy area. The following chapter interprets these findings in relation to disability models and policy debates discussed in the literature review.

Chapter 6 – Discussion

6.1 Chapter Overview

This study analysed how disability is depicted in Malaysian federal budget speeches from 2016 to 2026. Through qualitative coding of disability-related references, six recurring policy frames were identified: welfare and protection; accessibility and service access; symbolic recognition; education and developmental support; employment and economic participation; and care and rehabilitation support.

The findings indicate that disability is most frequently discussed within broader policy narratives concerning vulnerable or marginalised groups. Although the speeches include a range of policy measures aimed at PWDs, the framing of disability policy often situates these initiatives within larger social welfare, development, or economic participation programmes. This chapter explores these patterns in relation to the disability models and policy debates presented in the literature review. In doing so, it addresses the study's research question: How is disability framed in Malaysian federal budget speeches, and what do these framings reveal about the underlying policy approaches to disability in Malaysia?

6.2 Welfare or Charity-Based Framing and the Persistence of Welfare/Charity-Oriented Disability Policies

One of the most consistent patterns identified in the analysis is the framing of disability within welfare and protection discourse. Across multiple budget speeches, PWDs are frequently referenced alongside other groups considered socially vulnerable, including senior citizens, children, and low-income households.

For example, the Budget 2016 speech states that the Government will strengthen the “social safety net system... to assist PWD, the elderly and poor families,” while the Budget 2017 speech refers to government efforts to “protect the vulnerable groups” through financial allocations for PWDs. Similar language continues to appear in later speeches, including the Budget 2024 speech, which notes that social welfare assistance programmes will benefit “hardcore poor households, senior citizens, children and the disabled.”

These findings align with patterns in the literature on disability governance in Malaysia. Islam (2015) contends that disability policy in Malaysia has historically been shaped by a welfare or charity-focused approach, where PWDs are seen mainly as recipients of social assistance rather than as rights-bearing citizens. Within this framework, disability is regarded as a condition needing support or protection rather than as an issue of social participation or structural equality.

The persistence of welfare framing in budget speeches indicates that disability policy remains closely linked to social protection programmes run through welfare institutions. Although financial assistance schemes are vital in supporting PWDs, the dominance of welfare language may reinforce perceptions of PWDs as dependents rather than as active societal participants (Noor, 2025).

6.3 Accessibility and the Social Model of Disability

The findings also reveal a second pattern where disability is framed in relation to accessibility and service access, especially in education, public infrastructure, and communication services. Several speeches mention policies aimed at improving accessibility for

PWDs, including disability-friendly school facilities, tax relief for assistive equipment, and the introduction of sign language interpretation for television news programmes.

For example, the Budget 2020 speech states that school facilities will be upgraded to ensure they are “disabled friendly,” while the Budget 2022 speech announces plans for television networks to include sign language interpreters in news broadcasts. Similarly, the Budget 2026 speech introduces complimentary rail passes for PWDs to improve access to public transport.

These measures reflect elements of the social model of disability, which emphasises that disability arises from barriers within the social and physical environment rather than solely from individual impairments (Oliver, 1990, as cited in Chapman, 2020). Policies that address accessibility, therefore, aim to remove environmental barriers that restrict participation for PWDs.

However, while accessibility measures are mentioned in the speeches, they are often presented as individual service provisions or infrastructure improvements rather than as part of a broader, rights-based accessibility framework. As Lee (2026) notes, accessibility should be understood not as a welfare benefit but as a legal and infrastructural obligation that enables full participation in society. The inclusion of accessibility initiatives in the speeches, therefore, indicates some movement towards social model principles, although these measures remain embedded within broader programme-based policy approaches rather than being framed as enforceable rights.

6.4 Employment Framing and Economic Participation

Another significant theme identified in the analysis is the growing focus on employment and economic participation. Several budget speeches mention hiring incentives, training

programmes, and skill development initiatives to support labour market participation among PWDs.

For example, the Budget 2021 speech introduces incentives for employers to hire PWDs, while the Budget 2022 speech expands these measures by offering hiring subsidies. Later speeches also highlight training programmes and lifelong learning opportunities, including initiatives delivered through the Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp) and community colleges.

These initiatives align with wider international policy debates on disability inclusion in the labour market. The social model of disability highlights that employment barriers often stem from structural discrimination, inaccessible workplaces, and exclusionary hiring practices rather than from individual impairments. Policies aimed at promoting employment for PWDs thus seek to tackle labour market exclusion.

Despite employment initiatives, the literature shows that labour market participation among PWDs in Malaysia remains relatively low. According to disability advocacy data, workforce participation among registered PWDs remains significantly below national employment targets (OKU Rights Matter, 2023). This indicates that, although employment initiatives are discussed in policy circles, structural barriers to employment may persist.

6.5 Symbolic Recognition and Representational Narratives

The analysis also identified cases where disability is featured in speeches through symbolic recognition, especially regarding the achievements of Paralympic athletes or inspirational stories about PWDs.

For example, the Budget 2017 speech commends PWDs as “world-class sports heroes,” while the Budget 2022 speech celebrates Malaysia’s success at the Paralympic Games. These references emphasise athletes’ achievements and present disability through stories of resilience and national pride.

While such recognition can enhance positive public perceptions of disability, symbolic narratives may coexist alongside ongoing policy challenges. Disability scholars observe that celebratory portrayals of disability sometimes emphasise exceptional achievements rather than addressing the wider barriers faced by PWDs in daily life.

In this sense, symbolic recognition within policy discourse may act as a form of representational acknowledgement while making deeper structural issues—such as accessibility barriers or labour market exclusion—less visible in policy debates.

6.6 Education, Developmental Support, Care, and Rehabilitation Services

The final two frames identified in the analysis relate to education and developmental support, and care and rehabilitation services. Many budget speeches include references to programmes that support children with developmental disabilities, including funding for autism centres, early intervention programmes, and special education infrastructure.

For example, the Budget 2025 speech announces the creation of additional PERMATA centres to support early education for autistic children, while the Budget 2023 speech expands tax relief for intervention services related to developmental disabilities.

Similarly, several speeches mention care and rehabilitation programmes administered through welfare institutions and community rehabilitation centres. The Budget 2020 speech, for example, allocates funding for independent learning centres and training programmes for PWDs,

while the Budget 2022 speech emphasises investments in rehabilitation centres and mentoring programmes.

These initiatives illustrate policy approaches that emphasise service provision and support systems designed to assist PWDs and their families. However, similar to welfare framing, these policies may also reinforce the placement of disability within care or service delivery frameworks rather than within broader rights-based policy frameworks (Noor, 2025).

6.7 Summary

Overall, the findings indicate that disability in Malaysian federal budget speeches is portrayed through a mix of welfare support, accessibility programmes, employment initiatives, symbolic recognition, educational assistance, and rehabilitation services. While these efforts demonstrate the government's attempts to promote disability inclusion, the main policy narratives often frame disability within broader welfare or vulnerable population contexts.

These findings highlight the complex ways in which disability policy is communicated within national policy discourse and suggest that multiple policy models—including welfare, social inclusion, and economic participation—coexist within Malaysian disability governance. This reflects the intricate and sometimes overlapping ways disability is positioned within national policy discourse. Taken together, these findings suggest that while disability is increasingly framed in terms of inclusion and participation, the persistence of welfare-oriented and programme-based approaches reflects an underlying policy-implementation gap between stated commitments and structural realities. The following chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the key findings of the study and reflecting on their implications for disability policy and future research.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

7.1 Overview of the Study

This thesis examined how disability was framed in Malaysian federal budget speeches from 2016 to 2026 to understand its position within national policy discourse. Using a qualitative discourse analysis informed by social constructionism and framing theory, the study analysed references to PWDs in budget speeches delivered during this period to answer the research question: How is disability framed in Malaysian federal budget speeches, and what do these framings reveal about the underlying policy approaches to disability in Malaysia?

Budget speeches are a key platform for policy discourse, as they communicate government priorities, justify public expenditure decisions, and signal policy direction to both the public and political institutions (Ferry et al., 2014; Rajandran, 2019; Rashid Ali & Awab, 2023). Examining how disability is discussed in these speeches offers insights into how disability policy is conceptualised within broader national governance narratives.

Qualitative coding of disability-related excerpts identified six recurring frames in the speeches: welfare and protection; accessibility and service access; symbolic recognition; education and developmental support; employment and economic participation; and care and rehabilitation support. These frames reflect how disability appears in government policy discourse and reveal how disability policy initiatives are positioned within broader policy agendas. More importantly, the coexistence of these frames highlights a gap between how disability is framed in policy discourse and how it is implemented in practice. While budget speeches emphasise welfare support, accessibility, and inclusion, existing research shows that disability policies in Malaysia, particularly the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 [Act 685],

often lack enforcement mechanisms, clear accountability structures, and consistent implementation across sectors (Abdullah et al., 2017; Amar-Singh et al., 2021). In this sense, the findings of this study support and extend existing critiques by demonstrating that this gap is not only evident in policy outcomes but also embedded in how disability is constructed and communicated within official policy discourse.

7.2 Contributions of the Study

This study adds to the literature on disability policy and governance in multiple ways. First, the study offers a systematic analysis of how disability is framed within Malaysian federal budget speeches. While previous research has examined disability policy frameworks in Malaysia, fewer studies have examined how disability is discursively represented within official government policy narratives. By analysing budget speeches as a form of policy discourse, this study emphasises how disability is communicated within national policy agendas.

Second, the findings contribute to discussions about the evolution of disability policy models. The analysis shows that disability within Malaysian policy discourse reflects aspects of multiple policy approaches, including welfare-focused narratives, accessibility initiatives aligned with the social model of disability, and economic participation strategies. The coexistence of these frames suggests that disability governance may involve overlapping policy paradigms rather than a single dominant model. This reinforces the observation that the coexistence of multiple policy approaches may contribute to inconsistencies between policy intentions and implementation outcomes.

Third, the study demonstrates the importance of discourse analysis as a method for examining disability policy. By examining how disability is portrayed within official policy

narratives, the study emphasises the role of language in shaping policy priorities and public perceptions of disability.

7.3 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the analysis focuses on Malaysian federal budget speeches, a form of official government discourse. While budget speeches offer valuable insight into policy priorities, they do not capture the full scope of disability-related policy discussions across Malaysian governance institutions, civil society, or the disability community.

Second, discourse analysis examines how policy issues are portrayed rather than focusing on the implementation or success of specific policies. The presence of disability-related initiatives in policy speeches does not necessarily reflect how these initiatives are implemented or experienced by the disability community. This highlights the importance of distinguishing between policy discourse and policy practice when interpreting disability policy in Malaysia.

Future research could therefore expand this analysis by examining more policy documents, parliamentary debates, or implementation outcomes to gain a more comprehensive understanding of disability policy in Malaysia. One possible direction would be to analyse additional types of policy discourse, including parliamentary debates, policy reports, and ministerial speeches, to gain a broader understanding of how disability is discussed within Malaysian governance.

Another potential research avenue could explore how PWDs in Malaysia experience disability policy. Combining discourse analysis with qualitative research involving members of

the disability community might offer valuable insights into how policy narratives translate into lived experiences.

Finally, comparative research analysing disability framing across various countries could help situate Malaysia's policy discourse within broader international disability policy trends.

7.4 Final Remarks

Disability policy plays a crucial role in shaping opportunities and participation for PWDs in society. By analysing how disability is framed within Malaysian federal budget speeches, this study offers insights into how disability is positioned within national policy discourse and how various policy approaches coexist within government narratives.

Understanding these patterns is an important step in critically evaluating how disability policy is conceptualised and operationalised within national governance frameworks. As disability inclusion continues to attract attention in policy debates, analysing the language used in policy discourse remains a key tool for understanding how governments define and address disability-related issues.

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, future disability policy in Malaysia would benefit from strengthening the alignment between policy discourse and implementation. This includes moving beyond programme-based welfare approaches towards more enforceable rights-based frameworks, improving monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and ensuring greater consistency in implementation across sectors and regions. Greater inclusion of PWDs in policymaking processes may also help ensure that policy initiatives are more responsive to the needs of the disability community.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of Speech Excerpts Mentioning Disability in Malaysian Federal Budgets (2016-2026)

Table A1

Summary of Speech Excerpts Mentioning Disability in Malaysian Federal Budgets (2016-2026)

Budget Year	Budget Speech Excerpt	Framing	Observations
2016	“158:1. The Government will continue to <u>strengthen the social safety net system</u> with an allocation of almost RM2 billion to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to assist PWD , the elderly and poor families.” (p. 36)	Welfare / Protection	Disability is discussed within a broader social welfare framework alongside other groups such as the elderly and poor families.
2017	“232:3. The Government continues to <u>protect the vulnerable groups</u> . [...] A sum of RM535 million is provided to the persons with disabilities (PWDs)...” (pp. 38-39)	Welfare / Protection	Disability-related measures are introduced within a broader discourse of protecting vulnerable groups.
	“232:4. GST relief for the purchase of <u>aid equipment</u> for registered PWDs without going through Private Charitable Entities. The list of equipment eligible for tax relief will be expanded.” (p. 39)	Accessibility & Service Access	Disability is referenced in relation to tax relief for assistive equipment used by persons with disabilities.

	“233. Indeed, for us PWD brings broader meaning. They have <u>special and exceptional abilities</u> as they have proven themselves as world-class sports heroes.” (p. 39)	Symbolic Recognition	Persons with disabilities are described using language emphasising exceptional abilities and sporting achievement.
	“234. As such, with great joy, we have invited four of our 2016 Rio Paralympic athletes who have won three Gold medals and one Bronze medal.” (p. 36)	Symbolic Recognition	The speech highlights Paralympic athletes and celebrates their sporting achievements.
2018	“81. In addition, the TN50 vision emphasises the aspects of <u>safeguarding all groups</u> , including the welfare of People with Disabilities (PWDs) .” (p. 18)	Welfare / Protection	Disability is discussed within a broader vision of safeguarding social groups, with reference to the welfare of persons with disabilities.
	“98. ...RM654 million is allocated for construction of four pre-schools, nine PERMATA centres, including <u>two new centres for autistic children</u> ...” (p. 22)	Education & Developmental Support	Disability is referenced in relation to education infrastructure for autistic children.
	“208:1. The Government will provide an allocation of RM1.7 billion for the <u>welfare of senior citizens, PWDs and children</u> .” (p. 45)	Welfare / Protection	Persons with disabilities are referenced alongside other social groups within the context of welfare allocations.
2019	“73. The Government will identify and collaborate with <u>Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Social Enterprises</u> to support their efforts in uplifting the <u>underprivileged and marginalised communities</u> . Examples of such partnerships will include the Government procurement of envelopes from the disabled ...” (p. 17-18)	Employment / Economic Participation	Disability is referenced within broader discussions of marginalised communities and collaboration with NGOs and social enterprises.
2020	“105. For National Schools, the Government will further allocate RM23 million to ensure that these school facilities are <u>disabled</u>	Accessibility & Service Access	Disability is discussed in relation to accessibility in school

	friendly. This in line with the ‘zero reject’ policy introduced by the Ministry of Education, whereby no disabled child shall be denied an education due to his or her disability.” (p. 29)		facilities and the “zero reject” policy.
	“122. In addition, all disabled persons aged 18 years and above, with an income less than RM2,000 per month will also be covered. They will be entitled to <u>receive BSH payment</u> of RM300 and qualify automatically as a recipient of the <u>free MySalam Takaful Scheme</u> .” (p. 33)	Welfare / Protection	Persons with disabilities are included as recipients within a broader social assistance programme.
	“123. The Government will continue to <u>support welfare agencies and non-governmental organisations</u> in their activities... including childcare, disabled and elderly centres... An allocation of RM20 million for five new <u>Independent Learning Centres, Down Syndrome training and TASKA for disabled</u> . In addition, all <u>training and coaching services</u> provided by training service provider to the disabled persons will be exempted from service tax.” (p. 33-34)	Care & Rehabilitation Support	Disability is referenced in relation to welfare institutions, learning centres and training services supported through government allocations.
2021	“38. In relation to this, to enhance the <u>welfare of vulnerable groups</u> , the Government has agreed to increase the monthly rate of financial assistance as follows...” (p. 10)	Welfare / Protection	Disability-related measures are introduced within a broader discussion of financial assistance for vulnerable groups.
	“62:2. To encourage <u>employment for the disabled</u> , long-term unemployed and retrenched workers, employers will be given an additional incentive...” (p. 17)	Employment / Economic Participation	Disability is discussed in relation to initiatives encouraging employment through incentives for employers.
	“98. The Government will continue to <u>look after the welfare</u> of the elderly and the disabled through the Home Help Services Programme.” (p. 26)	Welfare / Protection	Disability is referenced within welfare programmes delivered alongside support for elderly populations.

	<p>“99. Further, to assist individual taxpayers with disabled spouse, additional tax relief limit for disabled spouse will be increased...” (p. 26)</p>	Welfare / Protection	Disability is referenced through tax relief measures related to households with a disabled spouse.
	<p>“110. The Government will allocate 19 million ringgit to implement the <u>Malaysia National Healthy Agenda</u> aimed at <u>strengthening healthy lifestyle</u> to reduce the risk of diabetes, hypertension and obesity. A total of 28 million ringgit is also provided to implement the <u>MyFit Programme</u>, <u>National Sports Day</u> and <u>Inspire Programme</u> for the disabled community.” (p. 29)</p>	Symbolic Recognition	Disability is referenced in relation to participation in national health and sports initiatives.
	<p>“135. In addition, an <u>unlimited travel pass</u> ... for children in year 1 to form 6 to commute to school, and for the disabled.” (p. 34)</p>	Accessibility & Service Access	Disability is referenced in relation to subsidised public transport access.
2022	<p>“62. In addition, to encourage employers to provide <u>employment opportunities</u> for specific groups like People with Disabilities (OKU), Orang Asli and ex-convicts, the Government will provide a <u>hiring incentive</u> of 30% of the monthly salary for the first six months and 40% for the next six months of the job...” (p. 14)</p>	Employment / Economic Participation	Disability is referenced in relation to employment initiatives through hiring incentives for employers.
	<p>“107. The Government will continue to actively implement socioeconomic development programmes and <u>preserve the welfare</u> of communities in focus, especially those involving the elderly, children, the disabled (OKU) and others.” (p. 24)</p>	Welfare / Protection	Disability is referenced within broader discussions of socioeconomic programmes and welfare support for selected community groups.
	<p>“111. The welfare of the disabled has never been forsaken. For the next year, the Government is providing a special allocation of RM30 million to upgrade Government buildings infrastructure to be OKU friendly.” (p. 25)</p>	Accessibility & Service Access	Disability is referenced in relation to accessibility improvements in government building infrastructure.

<p>“112. Apart from that, RM10 million is also allocated to Independent Living Centres and the Government Industrial Training and Rehabilitation Centre to implement <u>training and mentoring programmes</u> for the disabled.” (p. 25)</p>	<p>Care & Rehabilitation Support</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to training programmes and institutional rehabilitation services.</p>
<p>“113. In ensuring the availability of opportunities for disabled youths, the Government will set aside a special <u>quota of 1%</u> from the MyStep programme to be allocated for the disabled.” (p. 25)</p>	<p>Employment / Economic Participation</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to employment opportunities through a quota allocation within a government employment programme.</p>
<p>“114. ...To improve the <u>accessibility of the media</u> as well as to ensure that the disabled are kept up to date with current news and information... all TV networks including private channels will soon ensure <u>sign language interpreters</u> for their news programmes.” (p. 25)</p>	<p>Accessibility & Service Access</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to improving access to public information through sign language interpretation in television news.</p>
<p>“115. For 2022, the Government has also agreed to bear the full cost of Motor Vehicle Road Tax on all private vehicles owned by the disabled. Hopefully, this will provide a little <u>relief</u> for the disabled.” (p. 25)</p>	<p>Welfare / Protection</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to financial relief through the exemption of motor vehicle road tax.</p>
<p>“116. The Community Rehabilitation Programme (or PPKK) is used as an <u>early intervention medium</u> for children with disabilities to improve their skills and secure employment.” (p. 25)</p>	<p>Care & Rehabilitation Support</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to rehabilitation and early intervention programmes aimed at developing skills and employment readiness.</p>
<p>“122. The song Negaraku which resounded in Tokyo recently, marked the success of our athletes in winning gold at the recent <u>Paralympic Games</u>. [...] Therefore, to strengthen the OKU Sports programs, a total of RM10 million is specifically allocated to expand the development of OKU Sports and the implementation of an OKU Sports League.” (p. 27)</p>	<p>Symbolic Recognition</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to national sporting achievements and the development of disability sports programmes.</p>

	<p>“255:6. As a sign of appreciation, RM200 incentive payment will be given to the <i>Pembantu Pembangunan Masyarakat</i> Gred S19 and <i>Pembantu Perawatan Kebajikan</i> Gred U11 and U14 that are stationed at 25 welfare institutions for their services and sacrifices in tending and taking care of senior citizens, OKUs and patients with mental health issues.” (p. 59)</p>	Care & Rehabilitation Support	Disability is referenced in relation to welfare services provided within government care institutions.
2023	<p>“105. The Government will continue to encourage the private sector to pay higher wages. [...] SOCSO will also provide <u>incentives for employers to employ</u> vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, ex-convicts, the homeless, and chronically unemployed for up to RM600 monthly for up to three months.” (p. 29)</p>	Employment / Economic Participation	Disability is referenced in relation to employment incentives encouraging employers to hire persons with disabilities.
	<p>“188. The Ministry of Education will continue to receive the highest allocation of RM55.2 billion compared to RM52.6 billion in 2022. [...] In addition, schools with special needs students will have <u>disabled-friendly facilities</u>.” (p. 52-53)</p>	Accessibility & Service Access	Disability is referenced in relation to accessibility improvements in school infrastructure for students with special needs.
	<p>“200. Starting from the assessment year 2023, the tax relief limit for medical treatment expenditures will be raised from RM8,000 to RM10,000. In addition, the scope of this relief will also be expanded to cover the cost of <u>intervention treatment</u> for children with developmental disabilities such as Autism, Down Syndrome, and Specific Learning Disabilities.” (p. 56)</p>	Education & Developmental Support	Disability is referenced in relation to financial relief for medical and intervention treatment for children with developmental disabilities.
2024	<p>“111. Next year, the Human Resources Development Corporation (HRD Corp) will benefit from RM1.6 billion to provide 1.7 million training opportunities. [...] HRD Corp will reallocate a special fund ... to implement the Program Latihan MADANI including <u>talent retention and skill improvement programmes</u> for</p>	Employment / Economic Participation	Disability is referenced in relation to training and skill development programmes targeting vulnerable groups.

<p>MSME entrepreneurs and vulnerable groups such as former inmates, the disabled, the elderly and retirees.” (p. 51)</p>		
<p>“183. The Government will continue to encourage the vulnerable people such as the disabled, former inmates and senior citizens to secure jobs with meaningful salaries. [...] The <u>One Percent Policy on Employment Opportunities for the disabled</u> will be extended to former inmates and senior citizens...” (p. 87)</p>	<p>Employment / Economic Participation</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to employment initiatives, including job-matching programmes and the extension of employment quota policies.</p>
<p>“185. For 2024, the assistance channelled by the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) is worth more than RM2.4 billion. The assistance is expected to benefit more than 450,000 <i>rakyat</i>, especially hardcore poor households, senior citizens, children and the disabled.” (p. 88)</p>	<p>Welfare / Protection</p>	<p>Disability is referenced within broader welfare assistance programmes delivered by the Department of Social Welfare.</p>
<p>“204. The Government will continue to <u>protect the wellbeing and empower</u> the OKU to be <u>self-sufficient</u>. A total of RM1.2 billion is provided to channel various forms of assistance such as caregiving to chronically ill bedridden OKU, OKU who are unable to work and allowances for OKU workers. [...] OKU trainees who participate in the Community Recovery Programme [...] OKU micro entrepreneurs.” (pp. 97-98)</p>	<p>Employment / Economic Participation</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to financial assistance, caregiving support, training programmes and entrepreneurship initiatives aimed at supporting economic participation.</p>
<p>“217. The Government will continue to <u>empower and protect the wellbeing</u> of students with special needs. [...] A total of RM30 million is also provided for special education support equipment and disabled-friendly infrastructure to facilitate students and teachers in school.” (p. 103)</p>	<p>Accessibility & Service Access</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to education infrastructure and support equipment for students with special needs.</p>
<p>“224. The Government will continue to promote knowledge by encouraging vulnerable communities, including OKU, Orang Asli, single mothers and senior citizens to participate in the <u>Lifelong Learning Programme</u> in community colleges.” (pp. 105-106)</p>	<p>Employment / Economic Participation</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to lifelong learning and community education initiatives.</p>

	<p>“225. To improve the socio-economic level and empower local entrepreneurs, the Government has provided RM1 million to each public university to intensify the implementation of the Program Pengupayaan Komuniti MADANI and the OKU Community Rehabilitation Programme.” (p. 106)</p>	Care & Rehabilitation Support	Disability is referenced in relation to community rehabilitation programmes implemented through public universities.
2025	<p>“190. The People’s Income Initiative (IPR) is our effort to eradicate hardcore poverty by increasing the income of the people. Through the IPR INSAN initiative, Normaladiana Mohd Yazal, who is physically disabled (OKU), has helped her husband in business and successfully doubled their family’s income.” (p. 101)</p>	Employment / Economic Participation	Disability is referenced through an example highlighting entrepreneurship and income generation among programme participants.
	<p>“196. [...] This includes national schools, Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools, religious schools, military camp schools, and schools for Persons with Disabilities’ (PWD) special education.” (p. 105)</p>	Education & Developmental Support	Disability is referenced in relation to education infrastructure for special education schools.
	<p>“210. [...] Employers who hire persons with disabilities (PWDs) and former convicts will be granted an <u>incentive</u> ... under the supervision of SOCSO.” (p. 114)</p>	Employment / Economic Participation	Disability is referenced in relation to employment incentives encouraging employers to hire persons with disabilities.
	<p>“236. [...] An additional 50% tax deduction for the employer’s paid <u>supplementary care facility</u> ... for employees who are caring for a sick or disabled child or family member.” (p. 130)</p>	Care & Rehabilitation Support	Disability is referenced in relation to workplace care policies supporting employees caring for disabled family members.
	<p>“245. The Government is committed and will ensure that the <u>welfare and education</u> of autistic children are at the highest level: Establishing 11 new PERMATA Centres across various states to uplift the <u>early education</u> of autistic children. [...] To ensure a <u>comfortable and inclusive learning environment</u>, [...] to assist</p>	Education & Developmental Support	Disability is referenced in relation to early education, inclusive learning environments and specialised services for the autism community.

	registered private autism schools with the Ministry of Education in enhancing their learning facilities. Autism Service Centres are also being established, <u>which will benefit the autism community...</u> " (pp. 133-134)		
	"248. The <u>well-being</u> of the community of PWD continues to be <u>protected...</u> " (p. 136)	Welfare / Protection	Disability is referenced in relation to government commitments to protecting the well-being of persons with disabilities.
	"249. The Government will <u>ease the burden</u> of PWD taxpayers..." (p. 136)	Welfare / Protection	Disability is referenced in relation to financial relief measures for taxpayers with disabilities.
	"250. To ensure the public delivery system is more <u>inclusive</u> , the MyGCC Government Contact Centre will provide specific services to meet the needs of PWD callers, such as offering <u>video call with sign language</u> ." (p. 137)	Accessibility & Service Access	Disability is referenced in relation to improving accessibility of government services through sign language communication.
	"290. [...] For members of the security forces and enforcement agencies who suffer <u>permanent disability</u> while on duty, an Ex-Gratia Operational benefit ... will be granted starting from the year 2024." (pp. 149-150)	Welfare / Protection	Disability is referenced in relation to compensation and social protection benefits for public servants who experience permanent disability in the course of duty.
2026	"65. Opportunities for TVET education and training are widened... Community colleges will provide <u>lifelong learning programmes</u> for vulnerable communities such as PWDs , the elderly, single mothers and Orang Asli." (p. 53-54)	Employment / Economic Participation	Disability is referenced in relation to lifelong learning programmes delivered through community colleges for vulnerable groups.

<p>“149. Persons with disabilities (PWD) are a part of us – possessing their own <u>unique strengths, resilience and talents</u>. [...] Pusat Perkhidmatan Autisme (PPA) operations will be expanded... to enable 13 thousand PWDs with autism and their families to receive <u>integrated support</u>. Prasarana is committed to providing 100 <u>special mobility vans</u> to facilitate the movement of the PWD community. [...] The Government to increase the individual income tax relief for expenses related to <u>assessment and diagnosis, early intervention programmes and continuous rehabilitation treatment</u> for children with disabilities...” (pp. 117-119)</p>	<p>Care & Rehabilitation Support</p>	<p>Disability is referenced through multiple measures including autism service centres, mobility transport support and expanded tax relief for early intervention and rehabilitation services for children with disabilities.</p>
<p>“155. [...] This bag is the workmanship of Anthony Liew You Chung, a young PWD. The Government supports the role of <u>social enterprises</u> that assist the rakyat, especially vulnerable groups... in <u>increasing their income</u>.” (p. 122)</p>	<p>Employment / Economic Participation</p>	<p>Disability is referenced through a narrative example highlighting the role of social enterprises in supporting income generation among vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>“174. The Thirteenth Plan focuses on developing a <u>sustainable, quality, accessible and affordable care service ecosystem</u>. [...] The Government has agreed to a <u>double tax deduction</u> for companies who sponsor training for PWDs ...” (pp. 132-133)</p>	<p>Care & Rehabilitation Support</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to care sector development and incentives for companies sponsoring training for persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>“194. [...] To all parents who tirelessly raise their <u>special needs children</u>, the Government affirms its commitment to safeguarding their <u>welfare and quality education</u>. [...] TABIKA KEMAS will introduce Kelas Tunas Istimewa in every state to children with mild autism. [...] School facilities and support equipment will be upgraded to be more <u>accessible</u> for PWDs...” (pp. 151-152)</p>	<p>Education & Developmental Support</p>	<p>Disability is referenced in relation to specialised early education programmes and accessibility improvements in school facilities for students with disabilities.</p>

	“208. ...Complimentary MyRailLife passes for ... train services to PWDs... ” (p. 160)	Accessibility & Service Access	Disability is referenced in relation to subsidised public transport access through complimentary rail passes.
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Appendix B

Malaysian Budget Allocations for Persons with Disabilities (2016-2026)

Table B1

Malaysian Budget Allocations for Persons with Disabilities (2016-2026)

Year	Allocation Breakdown // Mention of PWDs in Budget Speeches
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM445 million: Monthly assistance for disabled workers (RM350), unemployed PWDs (RM200), and caregivers of bedridden PWDs (RM300). (p. 36, para. 158:1) - RM100 million: Establishment of 20 additional Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Centres, making up 528 CBRCs nationwide. (p. 36, para. 158:2) - Tax relief limit increased from RM6,000 to RM8,000 for parents of disabled children aged 18+ who are pursuing their studies at a local or foreign institution of higher learning, from the year of assessment 2016. (p. 43, para. 190)
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM150/month special needs student allowance + bus replacements for 21 special education schools (p. 36, para. 225) - RM535 million: Welfare assistance programme for PWDs including disabled employee allowance, disabled children training allowance, and assistance for PWDs who are unable to work. (p. 39, para. 232:3) - Direct Goods & Services Tax (GST) exemption for registered PWDs for the purchase of aid equipment without having to go through charity organizations. (p. 39, para. 232:4)
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional tax deductions for employers who hire workers certified by the Social Security Organisation's (SOCSO) Medical Board as fit to work, despite being affected by accidents and/or critical illness, are eligible for additional tax deductions. (p.18, para. 81) - RM654 million allocation for expansion of education infrastructure, including construction of 9 PERMATA centres, 2 of which are new centres for autistic children. (p. 22, para. 98) - RM100 million: Allowance increased by RM50/month for working and unemployed PWDs, including caretakers of PWDs. (p. 45, para. 208:2)

2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under the Pakatan Harapan government’s “Bantuan Sara Hidup” (BSH) cash aid programme, households with dependents aged 18 and below or are disabled (no age limit) will receive an additional RM120/child, up to a maximum of 4 dependents, meaning that households with a monthly income of < RM2,000 are eligible for up to RM1,480 annually, instead of the previous flat-rate maximum of RM1,200 under the previous government’s “Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia” (BR1M) cash aid programme. (p. 16, para. 66) - RM10 million allocated to identify and expand collaborative initiatives between the government and NGOs and social enterprises targeted at underprivileged and marginalized communities (i.e., PWDs among others). (p. 17-18, para. 73)
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM23 million: To ensure facilities in public schools are disabled-friendly, in accordance with the Ministry of Education’s “zero reject” policy whereby no disabled child shall be denied an education due to their disability. (p. 29, para. 105) - PWDs aged 18+ with an income of < RM2,000/month will also be covered under the BSH scheme, entitled to a cash aid payment of RM300 plus automatically qualify as a recipient of the mySalam B40 Takaful Protection Scheme (free government Islamic insurance programme for low-income households). (p. 33, para. 122) - As part of the government’s commitment to support NGOs and welfare agencies: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o RM80 million allocated towards the upgrade, repair and maintenance of 67 various institutions under the Department of Social Welfare (JKM), including centres for childcare, the disabled, and the elderly. (p. 34, para. 123:2) o RM20 million: 5 new Independent Learning Centres, Down Syndrome training and TASKA (childcare centres for children under 4 years old) for the disabled. Additionally, service tax exemptions will be given to registered centres providing training and coaching services to PWDs. (p. 34, para. 123:4)
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional RM700 million allocation, totalling RM2.2 billion, in monthly financial assistance to enhance the welfare of vulnerable groups (i.e., senior citizens, PWDs, and children): - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Financial assistance increased from RM250 to RM300 for PWDs who are unable to work. (p. 10, para. 38:1) o Financial assistance increased from RM350 to RM500 for senior citizens, caregivers of bedridden PWDs, and chronically ill patients. (p. 10, para. 38:2) o Incentive allowance increased from RM400 to RM450 for disabled workers. (p. 11, para. 38:3)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM2 billion allocated to ensure the success of 4 PenjanaKerjaya hiring initiatives, including giving employers of disabled, long-term unemployed, and retrenched workers a 60% wage subsidy, increasing the standard 40% incentive of the previous PERKESO hiring initiative programme by 20%. (p. 17, para. 62:2 & 63) - Through the Home Help Services Programme, the welfare of the elderly and the disabled will continue to be looked after by the government. As such: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Volunteers under the programme will receive an honorarium value of up to RM400, an increase from the previous RM150. o Members of vulnerable groups under the programme will receive an assistance value of RM80, an increase from the previous RM30. (p. 26, para. 98) - Taxpayers with disabled spouses to receive tax relief limit increase from RM3,500 to RM5,000. (p. 26, para. 99) - Staff working at CBRs/PDKs to receive salary increase from RM800/month to RM1,200/month, with supervisors receiving an increase from RM1,200/month to RM1,500/month (p. 26, para. 100) - RM28 million allocated to implement sports and fitness programmes like MyFit, National Sports Day, and Inspire OKU Aktif for the disability community. (p. 29, para. 110) - Unlimited monthly travel passes capped at RM5 for students in Standard 1 (age 7) to Form 6 (ages 18-19) as well as PWDs to use on Klang Valley commuter train services, northern commuter trains, Kuala Lipis-Tumpat intercity trains, and the Beaufort-Tenom train line in Sabah. (p. 34, para. 135)
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional RM200 million allocated for the Department of Social Welfare's (JKM) welfare assistance scheme, totalling RM2.4 billion in funding. Welfare assistance to be increased from RM980 to RM1,169 for those eligible, including unemployment assistance for PWDs. (p. 7, para. 30) - Employers of PWDs and other vulnerable groups (i.e., Orang Asli, ex-convicts, etc.) to receive a tiered hiring incentive covering a wage subsidy of 30% for the first 6 months and 40% for the next 6 months for employees earning at least RM1,200/month. (p. 14, para. 62) - Expansion of social protection coverage under SOCSO via 9 new categories, of which PWDs are among them. (p. 17, para. 75) - Socioeconomic development programmes and the welfare preservation of communities such as the elderly, children, and PWDs among others will continue to be actively implemented. (p. 24, para. 107) - RM30 million: Infrastructure of government buildings to be upgraded to be OKU friendly. Allocation also to be used towards providing more specialized paths for the visually impaired. (p. 25, para. 111)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM10 million: Implementation of training and mentoring programmes for PWDs at Independent Living Centres and JKM’s Industrial Training and Rehabilitation Centre (PLPP) in Bangi, Selangor. (p. 25, para. 112) - Special quota of 1% for PWDs in the MySTEP (Malaysia Short-Term Employment Programme) government initiative to ensure the availability of opportunities for disabled youth. (p. 25, para. 113) - RM1 million: All TV networks including private channels to include sign language interpreters in news programmes to improve PWDs’ media and news accessibility. (p. 25, para. 114) - Full exemption on Motor Vehicle Road Tax fees for all private vehicles owned by PWDs. (p. 25, para. 115) - RM10 million: Establishment of more early intervention Community Rehabilitation Programmes (PDDK) for children with disabilities in other public universities besides the maiden programme in Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). (p. 25, para. 116) - RM10 million: Expansion of athlete training programmes for PWDs and implementation of an OKU Sports League by the National Sports Council. (p. 27, para.122) - Personal Accident Protection Scheme for civil servants to be expanded with three new protections including accidental partial and/or permanent disablement, accident-related medical recovery expenses, and Badal Hajj (proxy Hajj). (p. 58, para. 255:3) - Civil servants stationed at 25 welfare institutions (specifically <i>Pembantu Pembangunan Masyarakat Gred S19</i> [Community Development Assistant Grade S19] and <i>Pembantu Perawatan Kebajikan Gred U11 dan U14</i> [Welfare Care Assistant Grade U11 and U14]) will receive a RM200 incentive payment for looking after senior citizens, PWDs, and patients with mental health issues. (p. 59, para. 255:6)
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM100 million allocated for employers of PWDs and other vulnerable groups (i.e., ex-convicts, homeless, chronically unemployed, etc.), whereby employers will receive a wage subsidy of up to RM600/month for up to 3 months via SOCSO’s hiring incentive to encourage the private sector to pay higher wages. (p. 29, para. 105) - From the Ministry of Education’s RM55.2 billion allocation, RM2.3 billion will be used to ensure that all schools have the best infrastructure and learning facilities for children, including providing schools with special needs students with disabled-friendly facilities. (pp. 52-53, para. 188) - Tax relief limit on medical treatment expenditures to be increased from RM8,000 to RM10,000. The scope of this relief is expanded to include the costs of diagnostic assessment, early intervention/rehabilitation treatment for children with developmental delays/disorders and/or learning disabilities (i.e., Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, Down Syndrome, Specific Learning Disabilities, etc.), up to a limit of RM4,000. (p. 56, para. 200)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM21.2 million operating grant allocation for NGOs handling private care institutions catered toward senior citizens, children, and PWDs. (p. 101) - PWD-Specific Allocation Breakdown [RM1.2 billion] (pp. 101-102) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o RM542 million: Allowance for disabled workers o RM346 million: Allowance for PWDs who are unable to work o RM170 million: Financial assistance for caregivers of bedridden PWDs and/or chronically patients o RM0.63 million: Financial assistance for PWDs o RM109 million: <i>Kurang Upaya Pemulihan Dalam Komuniti</i> – Allocation for the Community-Based Rehabilitation (PDK) Programme, a rehabilitation and intervention initiative for all categories of PWDs, particularly children and adolescents. - Free Companies Commission Malaysia (SSM) business registration and license renewal for PWDs under the 1 OKU 1 Business Scheme. Limited to ONE business per PWD only. (p. 102) - RM4 million: Free train service fares for PWDs as well as students between Standard 1 to Form 6. (p. 102) - RM5 million: To establish 50 new TASKA OKU (nurseries for children with disabilities), adding on to the existing 13 centres. (p. 102) - RM20 million: Teaching equipment supplies and facilities improvements in special needs schools. (p. 102)
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM20 million in special fund allocation for the Human Resources Development Corporation (HRD Corp) to implement Program Latihan MADANI (PLM), an initiative to reskill and upskill micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) entrepreneurs and vulnerable groups (i.e., PWDs), including the PWD Talent Enhancement Programme. (p. 51, para. 111; p. 158) - 1% Policy on Employment Opportunities for PWDs to be expanded to include ex-convicts and senior citizens via the MYFutureJobs job-matching and MySTEP programme. Members of vulnerable groups in the MySTEP programme will be given an allowance of RM1,500 for 6 months while on contractual placements with various ministries, Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLICs), Government-Linked Companies (GLCs), and/or strategic partners of the government. (p. 87, para. 183; p. 171-172) - PWDs among > 450,000 <i>rakyat</i> (citizens) expected to benefit from RM2.4 billion cash assistance allocation to the Department of Social Welfare (JKM), with eligibility requirements expanded to RM1,198/month in accordance with the 2023 Food Poverty Line Income (PGK). (p. 88, para. 185) - PWD-Specific Allocation Breakdown (pp. 97-98, para. 204; p. 178)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RM1.2 billion: Channelled toward various forms of assistances for the caregiving of bedridden and/or chronically ill PWDs, PWDs who are unable to work, and disabled worker allowances. ○ RM30 million: PWD trainees participating in Community-Based Rehabilitation (PDK) to receive an allowance increase from RM150/month to RM300/month. ○ RM50 million: Allocation for Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN) to support micro/small businesses by PWD entrepreneurs under Skim Mikro OKU. ○ RM2 million: Development of care and support course modules for PWDs to comprehensively develop their potential. - RM180 million: Construction of 18 new special education blocks in public schools across 10 out of 13 states nationwide, including both Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia. (p. 103, para. 217; p. 181) - RM30 million: Provision of special education teaching and learning support equipment as well as the upgrade of PWD-friendly school facilities and infrastructure for special needs students. (p. 103, para. 217; p. 181) - RM5 million allocated to 5,000 focused communities across 105 community colleges nationwide to encourage vulnerable communities (i.e., PWDs, etc.) to participate in the Lifelong Learning Programme. (pp. 105-106, para. 224) - RM1 million allocation for each public university to intensify the implementation of the <i>Program Pengupayaan Komuniti MADANI</i> and the OKU Community Rehabilitation Programme. (p. 106, para. 225)
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM1 billion allocated for maintenance (particularly upgrading dilapidated classrooms) of all types of schools, including schools for PWDs' special education schools among all schools (p.105, para. 196) - Employers who hire PWDs and ex-convicts will receive an incentive of RM600/month for 3 months under SOCSO supervision (p. 114, para. 210) - As part of the government's commitment via the Ministry of Education to the welfare and education of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (pp. 133-134, para. 245): - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RM125.4 million: Construction of 11 new PERMATA Kurnia Centres in 11 out of 13 states. ○ RM300 million: Construction of 2 new secondary schools for students with special needs in Sabah and Johor. The school in Johor will be the first school to solely focus on the education of children with ASD. ○ RM200 million: Continued provision of RM150/month for students with disabilities under the Special Needs Student Allowance. ○ RM15 million: Autism Learning Fee Assistance for parents with children with ASD.

- **RM10 million:** Enhancement of learning facilities at registered private autism schools.
- **RM5 million:** Establishment of Autism Service Centres.
- **PWD-Specific Allocation Breakdown [Measure 51]** (pp. 136-137, paras. 248-250; p. 252-253)
 - **RM1.3 billion:** PWDs wellbeing assistance under JKM (i.e., chronic patient care, PWDs who are unable to work, and disabled workers) increased from the previous RM1.2 billion allocation.
 - The salary eligibility threshold for recipients of the Incentive Allowance for Disabled Workers will be increased from RM1,500 to RM1,700.
 - **RM20 million:** Public higher education institutions (HEIs) to be developed and upgraded to be PWD-friendly.
 - **RM10 million:** Continued implementation of Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programmes for PWDs.
 - **RM10 million:** As part of the nation’s digital transformation agenda, government websites will be enhanced for PWD accessibility – with a particular emphasis on the visual- and/or hearing-impaired – via GovTech, a unit under the Digital Ministry which aims to improve service delivery quality and interagency administration operations.
 - **RM10 million:** MyGCC Government Contact Centre to provide specific services catering to PWDs (i.e., video calls with sign language) to ensure a more inclusive and PWD-friendly public delivery system.
 - **RM30 million:** Provision of special education teaching and learning support equipment as well as the upgrade of PWD-friendly school facilities and infrastructure for special needs students.
 - Abolishment of business registration renewal fees for PWDs under *Skim 1 OKU 1 Perniagaan* (S1O1P) [1 PWD 1 Business Scheme].
 - **RM2 million:** Critical equipment needs for autistic patients (MOH).
- RM50 million: PWDs among those in the target group for Bank Simpanan Nasional’s (BSN) micro credit scheme “*Skim Mikro Sinar*” to venture into business. (p. 204)
- Tax relief limit increases for PWDs (increased to RM7,000), PWDs’ spouses (increased to RM6,000), and unmarried children with disabilities (increased to RM8,000). Tax relief limit for treatment and rehabilitation expenses for children with autism is also increased to RM6,000. (pp. 134, 136-137, paras. 245 & 249)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PWDs included among job training programmes such as PWD development under MYInsensitif KESUMA Programme by HRDC (p. 225); sports accessibility programmes like PWD Sports Development Programme (p. 234); and social services for target groups as part of <i>Pusat Sokongan Sosial Setempat</i> (PSSS) (p. 245).
2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM5 million allocation for Government Mobile Services (strategic collaboration between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Higher Education) for the deployment of youth healthcare service providers to senior citizens and PWDs in rural and remote areas. (Budget Touchpoints 2026, p. 7) - RM5 million allocation for community colleges to provide lifelong learning programmes for vulnerable/target communities such as PWDs. (p. 54, para. 65) - RM20 million allocation for the MADANI Sinar Micro Financing Scheme targeting all nano/micro/small business sectors and entrepreneurs from target groups including PWDs. (Budget Touchpoints 2026, pp. 32-33) - PWD-Specific Allocation Breakdown (pp. 117-119, para. 149; Budget Touchpoints 2026, p. 65) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o RM1.4 billion: Welfare assistance for PWDs including chronically bedridden PWDs, PWDs who are unable to work, and disabled workers allowances. o RM12 million: Expansion of the Autism Service Centre, <i>Pusat Perkhidmatan Autisme</i> (PPA) operations to East Malaysia (Labuan, Sabah, and Sarawak). o RM146 million: Continuation of CBR/PDK programmes for PWDs in collaboration with NGOs and state governments. o Prasarana (Malaysia's public transportation systems and services) to provide 100 special mobility vans with wheelchair lift systems that can transport up to three wheelchair-bound persons to increase public transportation accessibility for PWDs. o Increased income tax relief for expenses ranging from RM6,000 to RM10,000 for assessment and diagnosis, early intervention programmes and continuous rehabilitation treatment for children with disabilities (aged 18 and below). - RM20 million allocation for NGOs to manage institutions for the elderly, children, and PWDs. (Budget Touchpoints 2026, p. 65) - RM8 million allocation for the continuation of Pusat Sokongan Sosial Setempat (PSSS) for women, children, elderly, and PWDs to receive emotional support, guidance, and counselling. (Budget Touchpoints 2026, p. 65) - Double tax deductions for companies sponsoring PWD-training and KPWKM-recognized care worker training programmes. (p. 133, para. 174)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Related to special education (p. 151, para. 194) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Construction of 2 new special education secondary schools. o RM700 million: Construction of 35 additional special education blocks in existing schools. o Introduction of Kelas Tunas Istimewa for children with mild autism in community kindergartens (<i>TABIKA KEMAS</i>) across all states. o RM270 million: All students with disabilities to receive a Special Needs Student Allowance of RM150/month. o RM30 million: Upgrade of school facilities and support equipment to be more accessible for PWDs. - RM3.9 million allocation for PWDs, all school students, and children under 6 years old to receive unlimited complimentary MyRailLife travel passes for the KTM Komuter and Shuttle Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) train services. (p. 160, para. 208) - RM22.9 million allocation in assistances and support for parents and children with autism (Budget Touchpoints 2026, p. 69) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o RM15 million: Learning Fees for Autistic Children Assistance o RM3 million: Autism Service Centre o RM4.3 million: Allowance for Children's Institutions o RM0.6 million: Allowance for Institution for the Disabled
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