Issues and Problems of Implementing Inclusive Education Policies in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Optimizing educational services is a concern for all stakeholders, including education services for children with special needs in elementary schools. However, education services for children with special needs in schools have yet to become a priority. This study aims to determine the issues and problems of implementing inclusive education policies in elementary schools. The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The subjects involved in this study were school principals, teachers, and 4 children with special needs. The data collection technique used in this study was through interviews, observation, and documentation, with the research instrument being an observation guide. The data obtained was then analyzed using qualitative techniques through three stages: data reduction, presentation, and verification. The results of data analysis show that the problems experienced by schools while implementing inclusive education are that there has not been good coordination between inclusive education policymakers and the school in implementing policies regarding procedures and supporting documents for organizing inclusive schools; there is no Special Assistance Teacher (GPK) so that the handling of ABK tends to be the same as other regular students. There is no individual learning curriculum and program, so it still uses the regular curriculum and learning program. These results then show that the implementation of incubation schools in Indonesia still needs to be by the concepts put forward and implementation guidelines, both in terms of students, teacher qualifications, facilities and infrastructure, and parental and community support.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government pays great attention to education for all its citizens without exception, and there is no discrimination, including for children with special needs. This is because education is seen as a human right or a basic need for every human being (Setiawan & Setyowati, 2020; Yuwono & Mirnawati, 2021). Children with Special Needs are significantly impaired psychologically, socially, emotionally, and sensorially, which hinders the growth process and the development of these children. Special treatment is needed in their education to live as normal people (Munajah et al., 2021; Putri & Hamdan, 2021; Sholihah & Chrysoekamto, 2021). Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009 states that students who have physical, emotional, social, and mental disorders and or have potential intelligence and or special intelligence need to get educational services that are by their needs and human rights, and their education can be held inclusively (Khasanah et al., 2018; Yunita et al., 2019). It doesn’t end there. The guarantee of equal rights in obtaining education for Children with Special Needs is also guaranteed in the Director General of Basic Education Circular Letter No. 380 of 2003 as a basis for perfecting regulations or legal basis as an umbrella for implementing inclusive education in Indonesia (Musafira & Hendriani, 2021; Saputra, 2018).

As an implication of implementing the inclusive education policy, the government, through the education office, has formed an inclusive education program, which is realized with inclusive schools for the continuity of the education of children with special needs. By Permendiknas No.70 of 2009, at least one elementary school is designated in each sub-district to be made an inclusive school through a series of procedures determined to ensure the success of the program (Marannu, 2022; Susilowati et al., 2022). The conditions that a school must meet to become an inclusive school are that schools need to prepare professional staff who support the implementation of inclusive education. Besides that, physical facilities that support accessibility must be built so that all students can access facilities easily (Arum et al., 2020; Gusti, 2021). Schools must also be open to accepting students from various backgrounds, including children with special needs, and preparing supporting documents, such as assessment results, individual learning programs, and lesson plans (Hidayati & Warmansyah, 2021; Irawati & Winario, 2020). In addition, friendly learning for all children must be implemented. Collaboration with other relevant institutions, such as special schools (SLB), health centers, and psychologists, is also very important. Finally, administrative requirements must be completed, and proposals must be submitted to the relevant agency to support efforts to become an inclusive school (Lestari et al., 2022; Mayya, 2019). By fulfilling all the requirements, schools can achieve the goal of better educational inclusion.

The existence of schools that organize inclusive education will provide opportunities for children with special needs to study in public schools close to where they live and is an effort to complete the compulsory education program, which is no exception for children with special needs so that education for children with special needs can also be implemented (Ardini & Rosmilia, 2021; Muafiah & Puspita, 2020). However, the reality shows that not all schools in Indonesia are ready to implement inclusive education. Obstacles to implementing inclusive education cause it, so it becomes a problem for schools in Indonesia that will organize this inclusive education (Ningrum, 2022; Sari & Hendriani, 2021; Tarnoto, 2016). The problems that are generally faced by non-inclusive schools that have students with special needs are the absence of an inclusive curriculum and the lack of educators who can guide children with special needs. One of the regular or non-inclusive schools that gets students with special needs that the author attends is SDN Cibiru 9, Bandung Regency. This school is a non-inclusive school with 4 students with special needs. The problems experienced by schools in implementing inclusive education are that they need to be able to meet the needs of students with special needs, and there are no learning programs that suit children’s needs.

Research on the implementation of non-inclusive schools with special needs and the learning process in schools has been carried out by previous researchers. First, research that highlights the importance of an inclusive approach in education to ensure that all students, including Children with Special Needs, have equal access and opportunities to learn (Astuti & Sudrajat, 2020; Chairunnisa & Rismita, 2022; Juuonen et al., 2019). Furthermore, research on strategies and practices that support the implementation of more inclusive, non-inclusive schools (Okech et al., 2021; Steven et al., 2016). As well as related research recognizing the importance of building physical and social environments that support the accessibility and participation of students with special needs (Ackah-Jnr & Danso, 2019; Mastrogiuseppe et al., 2021). In contrast to previous research, this research proposes school policies related to inclusive education services and inclusive learning processes in the context of non-inclusive schools. This novelty involves a holistic, inclusive approach, the development of individual learning programs, attention to the physical and social environment that supports it, and collaboration with other institutions. So, this research was carried out to describe inclusive education policies and services in non-inclusive schools in elementary schools.
2. METHOD

This research uses a type of qualitative research with a case study method. Qualitative research aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically, be it behavior, motivation, or action, using exposure to words and language. Qualitative research produces and processes descriptive data, such as interviews, field notes, drawings, photographs, etc. Regarding the matter being studied, the study's results emphasize meaning rather than results. The results of this study are not absolute or binding in the sense that one day, the results may change according to existing conditions. Research results are compiled and written in words based on facts in the field. In general, qualitative research is carried out in three stages, namely the stage of research questions that arise from something interesting or considered unusual so that researchers are interested in conducting a study, the stage of data collection, which is carried out through an interview process, by preparing questions with the aim of research to obtain answers to questions that attract attention or something odd so that certainty or truth is obtained, as well as the stage of presenting answers obtained from interviews and observations after going through the correct, comprehensive and logical analysis stages.

This research was conducted at SDN Cibiru 9, Bandung Regency, at Jl. Pendidikan No.13 Cibiru Hilir, Bandung Regency. This research was conducted on October 13, 2022. The subjects in this study were school principals, class teachers with children with special needs, and other teacher colleagues at SDN Cibiru 9, as well as 4 children with special needs in grade 1 and grade 2 as research subjects. Data sources in this study are people as sources and documentation as supporting data. In this study, the selected informants were school principals, class teachers, and other fellow teachers. Supporting data in this study are documents related to the research subject. Data collection techniques in this study used observation techniques, interviews, documentation, and field notes. Interviews were conducted with school principals, class teachers, and other fellow teachers, then observed the learning process in class.

Data collection tools are observation, direct observation, interviews, and document studies. The data validity and reliability process uses triangulation using inductive methods so that the research results will emphasize meaning more than generalization. In this study, the researcher also acts as an instrument because the researcher is an effective instrument for collecting data. Other instruments used by researchers are guiding instruments such as observation, interview guides, field notes, and documentation. This study uses qualitative analysis techniques through three stages: data reduction, presentation, and verification. The data reduction process was obtained from interviews, observations, documentation, and field notes. These data are still abstract, and then the data is simplified into a clear and detailed summary. At the data presentation stage, the data will be displayed as a simpler narrative presentation of the research results on Issues and Problems in the Implementation of Inclusive Education at SDN Cibiru 9, Bandung Regency. Furthermore, at the data verification stage, the data that has been processed is then concluded. The conclusion is taking the essence of present data and organizing it in short sentence statements containing broad meanings.

This study tested data validation using a credibility test using triangulation. This step was taken to increase confidence in the research data obtained. The triangulation used in this research is source triangulation, done by checking the data obtained through various sources. In research to test the credibility of data on the implementation of inclusive schools in elementary schools, data can be collected from school principals, class teachers, fellow teachers, and students with special needs through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data the researcher has analyzed will produce a conclusion, which is used as the result of this study.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of observations and interviews show that there are several findings in this study, including the first finding shows that SD Negeri Cibiru 9 is not an inclusive school or just an ordinary regular school but has students with special needs in grades 1 and grade 2 as many as 4 students with the different ones such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Development Delay, Deaf, and 1 undiagnosed ABK category. The second finding shows that as a policy implementer, school principals cannot refuse requests from parents of students who register their children with special needs to their school because, based on directions from the head of the relevant education office, it requires all students who register for the continuation of the compulsory education program in Indonesia without any discrimination. When viewed from the perspective of student parents, parents lack understanding of implementing inclusive schools. It can happen because it is influenced by several factors, such as the lack of socialization in the community regarding the implementation of inclusive schools, so the community does not know if there are regular schools that have the status of inclusive schools that are prepared to have at least one school in each
sub-district designated by the local education office that has to meet all the criteria as providers of inclusive education. Some parents think that if their child has a disability, they have to go to a special school. They fear their child will not get a proper education, even though there are supporting facilities such as professional staff and facilities in special schools. Infrastructure is sufficient to facilitate children with special needs so that the potential that exists in students can be optimized properly. Some parents even think attending special schools is expensive, so they are reluctant to send their children with special needs to attend them.

The third finding shows that the learning process is carried out in the full regular class category, where general students and children with special needs are gathered in the same class using the same curriculum. Of the four students with special needs, 3 are in grade 1, and 1 person is in grade 2. It makes it very difficult for a class teacher to handle two categories of children simultaneously. Even though according to the rules, in inclusive schools, there is at least one GPK (Special Assistance Teacher) helping the teacher in class. It takes effort and hard work to carry out a learning process like this because apart from teaching regular children, he also has to pay extra attention to those students with special needs.

Furthermore, the observations made during the learning process show that class teachers are sometimes assisted by other teachers who volunteer when the teacher has free time. It is done solely because they feel moved to help fellow friends who teach in classes with children with special needs. Of course, this solution is only temporary because when there are no other teachers who happen to be not teaching, the class teacher has to struggle alone to teach his regular students plus Children with Special Needs.

The fourth finding shows that in addition to difficulties in the learning process. These non-inclusive schools have students with special needs who experience problems preparing special programs for children with special needs. The school uses the regular curriculum and lesson plans for other normal children. No facilities and infrastructure support the learning process for Children with Special Needs, so the learning results will not be maximized. The authorities need more control or assistance to anticipate this problem. The fifth finding shows that Cibiru 9 Elementary School has not been able to meet the needs of an inclusive school, so in response to this, the school principal took the initiative to conduct an assessment with Special Education to coordinate in finding solutions to problems and steps that must be taken immediately for the continuation of the child’s learning process. with special needs in school. The positive response from the Special Education Department was that they supported the implementation of education for Children with Special Needs at SD Negeri Cibiru 9, even though it was a non-inclusive school, by starting to design training and mentoring for class teachers in which there were Children with Special Needs. Even though it is still an initial draft, this has brought fresh air to the school, in this case, the school principal and teachers. They hope that in the future, the handling of Children with Special Needs in their schools will be better to realize national education goals.

Discussion
Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, inclusive education at SDN Cibiru 6 has not been inclusive education to the fullest because of the lack of availability of expert facilities and infrastructure that suit students’ needs. Schools have tried to develop the quality of education to meet the educational needs of students. Furthermore, non-inclusive schools such as Cibiru 9 Public Elementary School respond to the presence of Children with Special Needs in their schools as part of implementing the policy of the principal and teachers of Cibiru 9 Public Elementary School, Bandung Regency, happily welcome the implementation of inclusive education which aims to equalize education rights for all citizens without discrimination. The school principal and teachers welcome students who want to study there openly. There is no difference between normal students and students with special needs. This is evidenced by Children with Special Needs in grades one and two. For about two years, the learning process was carried out with maximum effort and collaboration among teachers supported by the principal to realize education for all. With the limited facilities, infrastructure, and professional staff that should be available, they still try their best to serve children with special needs wholeheartedly. It shows that teachers in inclusive classes have the confidence to teach all children. Therefore, this is the basis for developing the implementation of inclusive classes. Implementation of learning in a differentiated classroom requires the right strategy. The teacher, as the executor of the strategy, is influenced by self-confidence, teaching experience, and the size of the classroom, which means that physical facilities are needed to support the implementation of learning (Khasanah et al., 2018; Lindner & Schwab, 2020; Suprayogi et al., 2017; Yunita et al., 2019).

Establishing an inclusive school can be done with effort, but attention should be paid to several mechanisms or procedures to create adequate inclusive education. There are at least seven requirements that must be met before a school becomes an inclusive school, namely having professional staff, supporting physical facilities, accepting students with backgrounds of children with special needs, having supporting
documents for implementing inclusive schools, being a child-friendly school, working with other institutions that support the implementation of inclusive learning and completing administrative requirements (Munajah et al., 2021; Putri & Hamdan, 2021; Sholihah & Chrysoekamto, 2021). Problems with implementing the policy of inclusive schools found at SD Negeri Cibiru 9 Bandung Regency is caused by several factors, such as understanding and implementation, school policies, learning conditions, teacher conditions, and support systems. It shows that inclusive education has not been fully understood but is only seen as an effort to enable all children to enter a regular school to fulfill students’ learning rights and is seen as easy access to education for all without any discrimination (Asiyah, 2018; Musyafira & Hendriani, 2021; Saputra, 2018).

Implementing inclusive education requires all parties’ cooperation to achieve perfect inclusive education. The results obtained in this study are in line with the results of previous research, which also revealed that in the implementation of inclusive education, there has been no coordination with professionals, organizations, or institutes related to inclusive education so that class teachers have more responsibility for the learning progress of special children (Rasmitadila et al., 2021). The results of further research reveal that the learning process has yet to be implemented using individual learning programs, so the teaching has not guaranteed success for children with special needs in capturing material (Mardiana & Khoiri, 2021). Other research results show that community involvement in supporting inclusive education still needs to improve at the preschool level so stakeholders and policymakers can continue to promote awareness about inclusive education and support institutions implementing inclusive education (Yasin et al., 2023). Based on some of the results of these studies, inclusive education has not been able to run well and still requires special attention.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the problems experienced during the implementation of inclusive education are that there has not been a good coordination between inclusive education policymakers and the school as implementing the policy, the handling of Children with Special Needs in the learning process is not optimal because there are no accompanying teachers (GPK). There is no curriculum and individual learning programs, so they still use the regular curriculum and learning programs.

5. REFERENCES


