

# Problematics of Inclusive Schools at the Elementary School Level

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**Abstract.** The purpose of inclusive education is to give equal places for normal students and students with special needs to study and interact together. In Malang city, schools with the label of inclusion have been launched since 2001. Each year, some improvements are always made to them, but they still encounter a lot of problems in terms of teachers, students, and local society. The objective of this present research was to reveal any obstacles encountered by inclusive schools at the elementary school level, so it is expected that the researchers and the schools could cooperate together in solving the problems.

A qualitative method was employed in this present research, in which the data were collected from the teachers in Malang city registered as inclusive schools at the Elementary Schools level. The method of data collection was made by administrating questionnaires with open questions to the teachers and doing direct observations. Questions were developed in line with the needs in the field. The questions were in the form of open and closed questions.

The results showed some problems faced by the students with special needs, the regular students, and the teachers. Various problems should be solved, among of which are that there are lot of schools that have not been ready to become inclusive schools since they do not have any special assistant teachers, a curriculum which is appropriate with students with special needs, and a lack of cooperation with various parties in the society and the government dealing with the pioneering of inclusive schools at the elementary school level.

**Keywords:** *problematic, inclusive school, elementary school*

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic need for each person to guarantee his/her survival to be more dignified. She or he has rights to get decent education; therefore, the nation should provide quality education services to each citizen without any exception, including those with different abilities (children with special needs) as stated in the Article 21 (1) of

the 1945 Constitution. In general, children with special needs possess special schools called extraordinary schools (SLB) where these schools are specially intended to create an exclusivity wall that hinders the process of getting to know one each other among children with special needs and normal ones. Due to such a dividing net, the government has a commitment to improving equal access to education through inclusive schools which are regular schools that coordinate and integrate regular students and students with special needs in the same education level, although the materials and their system of delivery are different. It is in line with the Law no. 20 year 2003 3 Article 5 stating that 1) Every citizen has equal rights to receive a good quality education, and citizens with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and/or social deficiencies shall have the right to receive special education."

Inclusive education is a solution to obstacles the students with special needs have in getting education services as a whole. Inclusive education answers the gap between students with special needs and other regular children. Inclusive education sees the daily life reality and accepts that each child is different, and the word "normal" or "abnormal" merely refers to one of or some aspects as one whole. In the concept of extraordinary education, inclusive education is interpreted as the combination between extraordinary education and school education in general. In the inclusive school, there is no normal or abnormal group. Inclusive education is aimed at accommodating all students from a great variety of backgrounds, individual or social conditions to be educated and to study together without any discrimination. In inclusive learning, children with special needs study with the class teachers assisted by special companion teachers. Each student may be accepted as a part of the class to help, communicate, and interact with one another with teachers and his/her classmates, so that his individual needs may be met [1]. This includes children with disabilities who may need assistance. It would be even better if, while planning for such activities, the teacher discusses them with all the children in the class, and ensures that each child is given an opportunity to contribute. When planning, therefore, teachers must pay special attention to ensuring the

participation of all [2]. Inclusive education refers to an education system that

accommodates all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions [3]. Inclusive education as "an education system that includes a large diversity of learners and which differentiates education for this diversity

The terms "inclusive education" and "inclusion" are unfortunately used in several different senses among GCC policymakers and educators: inclusive education and inclusion can mean both 'education for all' (all learners have access to educational institutions, either segregated or integrated) or more narrowly and technically, the mainstreaming of disabled and handicapped students into the regular, traditional classroom [4]. Inclusive education is not merely about providing access to mainstream school for pupils who have previously been excluded. It is not about closing down an unacceptable system of segregated provision and dumping those pupils in an unchanged mainstream system. Existing school systems in terms of physical factors, curriculum aspects, teaching expectations and styles, leadership roles will have to change [5]. The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia is expected to be able to produce the young generation that will not distinguish the existing differences, that may accept and understand any kinds of distinctions, that do not create any system of discrimination in their social life. Basically, the implementation of inclusive education is not easy, since there some matters that should be mastered or should exist at schools establishing inclusive-based education. [6] as follows) 1: the school, 2) Grouping students according to their needs, 3) School placement, 4) facilities and infrastructures, 5) teachers, 6) learning activities, 7) after graduation, and 8) government's efforts [7]. Conceptually, academic inclusion means a thorough integration of all students without exception, students with special needs in regular classes [8].

Teachers hypothesize that it is very practical to give almost all supports needed by students with special needs to be combined with normal students by giving effective training and good preparations to the teachers and the school professionals in order to be able to work with students and to solve any problems that would appear [9]. Inclusive schools will run well if all parties such as the teachers, the schools, the parents, the society and the government participate. Inclusive schools themselves are a concept of joining normal students and students with special needs [10], [11]. Therefore, successful inclusive education should involve various students with proper methodology, curriculum and evaluation [12]. Good inclusive education is the one that may raise all potentials of students with special needs. As a result, they do

not feel any objection to study together with regular students [13]. Access equal education have been quite a challenge as this has been dominated by their isolation and exclusion [14].

In inclusive education in Indonesia, not all children with special needs can go to school together with normal children, the grouping of children with special needs and normal children is as follows: 1) children with light visual impairment, 2) slow learners with the IQ level of 70, 3) physical disorders and health problems, but they are still able to follow an education at school, 4) learning difficulties, 5) slow learners, 6) children with superior abilities and 7) communication disorders. Inclusive education is a concept of education representing the whole aspects that deal with openness in accepting children with special needs to be able to get equal rights as citizens. The concept of inclusive education includes the concepts of 1) children and parents, 2) education and school, 3) diversity and discrimination, 4) advancing inclusion, 5) human resources. All parties involved in implementing inclusive education should be able to get rid of any discrimination and exclusion that corner children with special needs from their place at school.

## **METHOD**

A qualitative method was employed in this present research. [15] Quantitative research methods were originally developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena. The data were collected from the teachers who taught in inclusive elementary schools in Malang city. The number of teachers serving as the subjects was 96 persons from 16 schools in Malang. The method of data collection was conducted by administrating questionnaires with open questions. The questionnaires were arranged on the basis of the aspects needed in succeeding the inclusive education program. The respondents consisted of teachers in inclusive schools. The teachers were asked to answer opened and closed questions. The answers to the questions were added with direct observations during the learning activities. From the answers that had been coded and categorized, some conclusions were drawn.

## **RESULT & DISCUSSION**

This present research used a qualitative method. The data were obtained from the results of the answers to the open and closed questions, and the observations in the field. The followings are the results of the analysis and also problems that appeared during the implementation of inclusive education.

- a. **Students**  
The problems encountered by students with special need in inclusive schools at the elementary school level were that they needed different treatment (27,1%), were difficult to follow the lessons in accordance with the predetermined objectives (25.6%), had attitudes that cannot be conditioned so that they bothered regular students (22%) and had feelings of inferiority (24.6%).
- b. **Teachers**  
Problems faced by the teachers on the basis of open and closed questions are among others as follows: the lack of class assistant teachers (30.5%), teachers' difficulties in teaching students with special needs (17.8%), teachers' treatments to the students with special needs (16.7%), teachers' classroom management when students with special needs were joined with regular students (9.6%), no special curriculum focused on students with special needs (7.5%) and also teachers' backgrounds which were not in line with their education (18%).
- c. **School Management**  
Problems that raised in terms of the school management were as follows: no established programs for inclusive schools (68.9%), teaching-learning process which was not maximum (16.6%), the lack of learning supports to accommodate children with special needs (14.5%).
- d. **Parents**  
Most problems encountered by the parents were as follows: the lack of concern from the parents to students with special needs (18.9%), the parents' understanding of students with special needs (16.6%), the parents who had children with special needs that did not want their children were distinguished from regular students (18,8%), and the parents who felt inferiority with their children's condition (45.7%).
- e. **Others**  
From the students, the teachers, the school management and the parents, some other problems were also presented namely less facilities and infrastructures dealing with students with special needs (45.6%), less involvements from the stakeholders (20.6%) and less support from the government (33.8%).

Inclusive education point to teacher education and school leadership as essential for the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom [16]. The success of inclusive schools should involve a lot of parties, if it just involves one party, it will not run smoothly [17]. Supports

from all parties will make [18] that inclusive schools are a process involving all school staffs and students for the schools to be able to develop well. The approach to organizing students, the roles played by the teaching staffs, the approach to the teachings and the curriculum plays important roles. The schools should also cooperate with parties dealing with other students with special needs [19]. Being ridiculed and rejected by their peers and social isolation were also fears of parents of children with disabilities. Teachers are an important actor in the process of learning activities. It is expected that if teachers have understood about the students with special needs, they would be able to teach well so that they may transfer their knowledge either through the student guardians, the parents possessing children with special needs, and the parents with regular students. In this case, the government is responsible for the proposal of the establishment of inclusive schools although as a whole the techniques in building such schools and the decision of making changes in each school are given to the schools themselves [20]. Many hope parents of children with disabilities wanted them to have normal life experience and not be excluded or isolated from their peer group

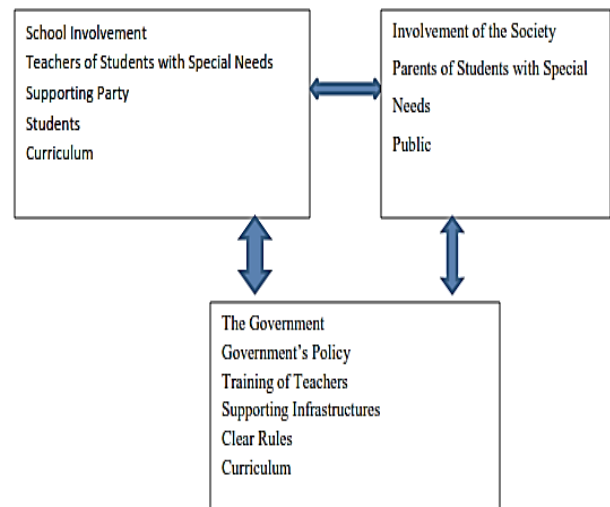


Figure 1. Elements that should be involved in smoothing out inclusive schools

**CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the research results, it can be concluded that the problems that appear concerning with the implementation of inclusive education from the teachers, the students, the parents, the schools, and the society deals with the lack of facilities and infrastructures supporting the establishment of inclusive schools. This condition is caused by the fact that a specific form about the concept of the establishment of an inclusive school

is less accommodated. Teachers are the most important element that serves as the keyword for the implementation of the education system in the classroom. However, without any class assistant teachers and certificates, which are in line with the educational background of children with special needs, the learning activities in the classroom will not run well. Regular students and students with special needs deserve the same comfort in learning activities. Students with special needs require assistant teachers to be able to accommodate activities in the classroom. If such assistant teachers do not exist, students with special needs often bother regular students. Therefore, the system of the inclusive school that has not well established may disturb the process of learning activities in the classroom. Based on the descriptions of the data on the problematics of inclusive schools in Malang city at the elementary school level, it is necessary to have a clear concept supported by the government, the schools, the teachers, and the parents that work together to create a concept of an inclusive school which is appropriate with the students' needs.

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