



# Identification of Challenges and Problems of Education Institutions in Providing Learning Media for Blind Children

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## ABSTRACT

Children with disabilities have limitations, such as physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, or some combination of these limitations. Even though they have limitations, children with special needs need learning media which can provide a fun learning atmosphere. However, much is still under-explored about the challenges and problems faced by the educational institutions with special needs (SLB) in Indonesia. Hence, this study aims to identify the challenges and problems of SLB in the Cicalengka region. The method used in this study was descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques in the forms of (1) observation, (2) interviews, and (3) documentation. The results of this study revealed that the challenges and problems of the SLB in managing the students include the curriculum which needed adjustment to the student needs, and the boredom the students felt due to their special needs conditions as they need customised learning experiences. Furthermore, another problem identified was the lack of learning facilities for blind children, particularly for playing while learning which causes less variation in the learning media. Consequently, they did not have a chance to develop and express themselves. Thus, further efforts were needed to reduce stress in children through suitable learning media.

**Keywords:** *Blind children, learning media, students with special needs.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Some children may have some limitations which can be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, or some combination of these limitations. Even so, individuals with disabilities, especially in Indonesia, still need facilities for education and means of playing or expressing themselves. This is in line with the mandate of Law Number 8 of 2006 concerning individuals with disabilities. Thus, they can optimize all the abilities they have with pleasure. One of the persons with disabilities or special needs with physical limitations is the blind, that is someone who has a visual impairment. The blind are classified into two, namely someone with total blindness and someone with little vision. For individuals who have vision accuracy of less than 6/60 after being corrected or individuals who no longer have vision, the learning process emphasizes the senses of touch and sense of hearing (Damayanti, 2015).

Even though they have limitations, in Indonesia children with special needs still could get education in special schools (SLB). The schools were established to develop the abilities of children with special needs so that they can provide benefits for life because it is possible for them to also have the same abilities as children in general.

With the existence of special schools in Indonesia, children with needs can experience learning activities as experienced by other children. Children with special needs learn based on their own desires and abilities. Even some of them cannot be posted or banned because of their unstable emotional state (Wulandari & Zainudin, 2022). Children with special needs cannot absorb or accept material provided by the teacher in the usual way. So, if only placing children with special needs in class makes them bored (Wulandari & Zainudin, 2022).

Learning media is an intermediary for students in the learning process at SLB. The use of learning media is as a tool used to teach and create a climate as well as an environment that is arranged by the teacher in such a way. It aims to make students feel more comfortable in the classroom environment to receive or absorb the material presented by the teacher.

Several researchers previously conducted research on the difficulties or problems faced by special schools in Indonesia. Hasmira (2016) examined the difficulties of learning mathematics in deaf students, while Suryaningrum et al. (2016) examined the problems and expectations of teachers of children with special needs in Early Childhood Education. Rokhmah and Warsiti (2015) researched the identification of reproductive health needs for adolescent girls with disabilities (mentally disabled).

Based on the background above, previous research has not examined the challenges and problems of educational institutions in providing learning media for blind children. This research reveals this important problem, namely the non-identification of the challenges and problems faced by educational institutions will lead to a non-improvement of the learning process for visually impaired students in special schools. Therefore, the researcher formulates the problem in research questions, namely (1) what are the challenges and problems of SLB in the Cicalengka region? (2) how are efforts to overcome the challenges and problems of SLB in the Cicalengka region?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Blind is a term used for someone who has lost his sight, and it affects the learning process in the school environment. Legally, the definition of a child with visual impairment is divided into two, namely a blind child cannot use his sense of sight to carry out the learning process. However, it can still perceive light and dark or have multiple visual images. Second, children with visual impairments have difficulty completing visual tasks, but can learn with the help of special technology and teaching (Muawwanah et al., 2021). The form of teaching or educational approach for blind children, namely braille. Braille is a tactile system for reading and writing in which letters, numbers and others are made by placing dots. This Braille will make it easier for blind children to read all forms of literacy (Muawwanah et al., 2021). The use of attractive media for learning is the first step in encouraging children's interest in learning in learning activities. The use of media can help children with special needs understand the material taught by the teacher (Tumanggor et al., 2023).

## **3. METHOD**

This research uses qualitative research, namely the method used to research objects naturally, the researcher is used as a key instrument (Sugiyono, 2016). The approach used in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach to describe as a whole and in depth related to social reality and phenomena that occur in the research subject community so that the characteristics, characteristics, characteristics, and models of the phenomenon are described (Sanjaya, 2015). This research is in the SLB area of Cicalengka, Bandung Regency, West Java Province. Sources of data taken in this study are literary data sources to find the theoretical basis of the problems under study and field research, namely data sources obtained directly from the field by means of researchers going directly to the field to find more concrete data.

There are two kinds of data in this study, namely primary data related to internal factors that become challenges and problems with special schools. This data was obtained directly from school principals, blind teachers, and blind students in special schools. The second is secondary data, namely data that can support and complement primary data, this data is SLB data that is spread on the internet. Data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation conducted on school principals, blind educators, and blind students in special schools. The data analysis technique in this study was carried out using descriptive qualitative research, using content analysis (Stemler, 2015), where the challenges and problems in SLB were deductively coded from the data from observation, interview, and document analysis.

## **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***4.1. Challenges and Problems of Educational Institutions***

The challenges faced by SLB in the Cicalengka region come from the blind students themselves. Based on the results of an interview conducted on October 20, 2022, in the learning process, the curriculum applied in SLB is the government's curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum, but its application is adjusted to the abilities of blind students because each student has different abilities. An interview with the principal as can be seen in excerpt 1 below indicated this issue.

**Excerpt 1**

"Curriculum is also a reference from the center, only in SLB there is a special strategy, which is to look at the characteristics of the students."

Interview with the teachers also show that there were other issues prevailing (see Excerpt 2 and 3).

**Excerpt 2**

"Even though we are at the same level, for example in grade 1 elementary school there are 5 people, those 5 people don't necessarily have the same abilities."

In addition, blind students tend to easily feel bored with the learning process so that this causes the classroom to be not conducive.

**Excerpt 3**

"SLB students sometimes feel bored when studying. So, they want to go home. If that's the case, what are you going to do?"

In the institutional level, these issues needed to be resolved by the stakeholders involved.

#### **4.2. Efforts to Overcome SLB Challenges and Problems in Cicalengka**

Based on the results of observations of blind students, the data shows that one out of five students with visual impairments in SLB Cicalengka have low self-confidence. This can be seen from how the student answers questions in a low voice and tends to be silent.

The results of other observations show that two out of five blind students in SLB talk a lot. However, the topics discussed tend to be incompatible with matters relating to the topics being discussed. For example: students suddenly ask personal questions, namely motorbike ownership when asked to introduce themselves. In addition, it was also found that they tend to be emotionally unstable, namely irritability and crying. Based on the results of the research, the effort that must be made in overcoming challenges and problems in SLB in the Cicalengka region is to create new learning media with the concept of playing. This is done so that students can feel a new atmosphere that is more fun because it is done in a fun way, namely playing a game.

Learning while playing media that can be used as an effort to overcome the challenges and problems of SLB is a game with card media in which there are several questions and challenges that must be answered and carried out by students, this can train how students read braille, train to speak or communicate respond well to the questions asked, as well as practice confidence in expressing perspectives and feelings. In addition to cards, students can also be given literacy materials that can improve and foster moral values using folklore media. Folklore that is spread all over the archipelago has messages or moral mandates that can be a reminder or a form of learning for blind students. Apart from that to train students' emotions, blind students can be given literacy or teaching materials in reading and writing poetry. This poem can stimulate blind students to pour their feelings into a written form and finally produce a work.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings above, the challenges and problems faced by SLB in the Cicalengka region are that blind students in SLB tend to easily feel bored, lack self-confidence, and be emotionally unstable. In addition, SLB does not have interesting learning media, so the learning media is less varied. Therefore, efforts are needed to overcome challenges and problems by creating new learning media, namely learning media while playing with cards.

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