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The Challenges of Inclusive Education in Indonesia

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Abstract

Inclusive education is the fulfillment of the right to education for all people, including children with special needs. In Indonesia, the right to education of children with special needs is guaranteed and protected by the constitution. This paper aims to discuss the challenges of inclusive education in Indonesia. This paper finds that the challenges of inclusive education in Indonesia are socio-cultural issues that include the belief system of society and parents; regulatory issues, technical policies, and operations of inclusive education; as well as a support system. Based on these findings, it is hoped that all stakeholders will have a commitment to accept the presence of children with special needs, conduct socialization, and accelerate regulations on inclusive education in the regions.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs, Education for All.*

1. Introduction

The right to education for children with special needs (ABK) in Indonesia is protected and guaranteed by laws and regulations. It's just that, until now, the fulfillment of education rights for children with special needs in Indonesia is still very dominant in special education units, namely Special Primary Schools (SDLB), Special Junior High Schools (SMPLB), and Special Senior High Schools (SMALB) and / or Special School (SLB).

In its journey, it is felt that the special education unit has not been maximal in providing educational services for children with special needs because these special education institutions are limited in number and are usually located in regency / city capitals. Whereas ABK is spread in almost all regions, not only in regency / city capitals. As a result, some of them, especially those whose parents' economic abilities are weak, are forced not to go to school because the location of the special education institution is far from home; Meanwhile, if they are to be sent to a nearby educational institution, the institution is not willing to accept it because they feel unable to serve it. Some of the other ABK may have been accepted at the closest educational institution, but because of the absence of special services for them, they are at risk of staying in class and eventually dropping out of school. Of course, this condition will result in the failure of the compulsory education program in this country.

Moreover, the government does not have complete and accurate data on ABK. In addition, the concept of handling ABK often varies between government agencies, both at the central and regional levels [1]. Therefore, innovative, and strategic steps are needed to overcome this problem, namely by implementing inclusive education in public schools.

The implementation of inclusive education in public schools is very important. There are at least four main reasons for this. First, discrimination in education. The segregation system, which has been running for a long time, seems to be a correct concept, even though in reality it encourages discriminatory understanding. Children with special needs are subordinate to the social system of society because they have been "placed in a separate box" and "underestimated". Inclusive education is recognized as the most appropriate system to reconstruct an understanding of the existence and role of children with special needs. Second, there is a high gap between policies and education service acceptance for children with special needs and children in general. Policies that are more pro-children in general slowly and systematically number the support for children with special needs. Third, the number of special needs children who are scattered throughout the archipelago will be helped if they are served in public schools which are almost evenly distributed. With reference to the research results that a number of ABK will get educational services through public schools [2]. Fourth, encouraging the creation of a society that is open to differences and provides equal opportunities as citizens who are more qualified and empowered. Aspects of inclusive education that are open, fair, non-discriminatory, sensitive to differences, centered on child specificity, innovative learning, 'stakeholder' collaboration, and development of life skills, will transform the position and role of children with special needs from 'nobody' to being citizens state in the life of the nation and state.

2. Result and Discussion

Smith said that inclusion is a positive diction and an effort to unite children who have obstacles to learn together and live together [3]. Marthan said that inclusive education is an educational service for students with special needs in regular schools [4]. In other words, inclusive education is an educational service for students with special needs regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or other conditions to get educational services together in all regular education units [5].

As an innovative and strategic step, the implementation of inclusive education is not without problems. According to Alimin, in general, the problems in the application of inclusive education can be grouped into 3 (three), namely: (1) socio-cultural problems concerning the belief system regarding the philosophy of inclusive education, (2) there is still a lack of regulations and policy (rule and policy) operational technical implementation of inclusive education and (3) lack of support groups and advocates (organization system) in supporting the implementation of inclusive education [6].

As mentioned above, the socio-cultural problems in it related to the belief system towards the philosophy of inclusive education are the first obstacles. Why not, because the philosophy of inclusive education implies education for all which implies the belief that all children, including ABK, can be educated by anyone and in any educational unit. If this awareness is not built, it is not surprising that some circles are still skeptical of the importance of inclusive education. Of course, it will be much easier to develop inclusive education if all parents (whether with special needs or not) and educated individuals already understand and take sides with the importance of education services for children with special needs. This fact suggests the need for deconstruction and transformation of the understanding of special education, as well as the division of roles between special schools and public schools in serving ABK.

An alternative solution that can be done is to provide sufficient understanding to parents, the community, teachers and school principals as well as policy makers through socialization activities, publications and campaigns for inclusive education through banners / billboards, printed and electronic media (television and radio) and social media for example. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others. Of course, this effort must be carried out in a systematic and planned manner by involving

practitioners, observers and / or special education activists. If these efforts are consistent, then in a relatively short time, public awareness of the importance of inclusive education will grow.

Then rather than that, another big problem faced in the implementation of inclusive education is the lack of technical regulations and policies regarding the implementation of inclusive education. As stated earlier that inclusive education implies a division of roles between special schools and public schools in serving children with special needs, if then this is determined by clear rules and policies that will certainly make the application of inclusive education targeted.

The set of regulations and policies that the author means are regional regulations and governor and / or regent / mayor regulations related to the implementation of inclusive education in the regions. Because it cannot be denied that in Indonesia there are still very few regional regulations or governor and regent / mayor regulations governing the implementation of inclusive education in the regions. The result is that the technical operation of the Regional Work Units (SKPD), in this case the Education Office, is unable to technically and operationally regulate the implementation of inclusive education in the education units under its guidance.

Therefore, it takes serious effort from all parties to convince policy makers to produce a set of regulations both in the form of regional regulations and governor and regent / mayor regulations. Of course, this is not an easy endeavor because it requires a good breakthrough, including the existence of a central government policy and / or civil society to give appreciation to Regional Heads (Governors and Regents / Mayors) who care for ABK with benchmarks such as the availability of regional regulations or governor and regent / mayor regulations on inclusive education; The fulfillment of the minimum mandate of Permediknas Number 70 of 2009: in districts / cities there are at least 1 (one) SMA / SMK that provides inclusive education, in sub-districts there are at least 1 (one) SD and SMP that provide inclusive education and in 1 (one) study group at least provided 1 (one) seat for ABK; availability of pro-ABK facilities and infrastructure; opening opportunities for ABK to work in the world of work and other indicators [7]. Then from that operationally the central government is expected to also encourage the provincial and district / city governments by making the implementation of inclusive education as a benchmark for the success index of regional heads (governors and regents / mayors) in their leadership period.

The existence of these regulations and policies must truly be able to become a direction in the implementation of inclusive education in the regions and be prepared to accommodate the operational technical problems of implementing inclusive education in education units. There are at least 6 (six) technical problems of implementing inclusive education in schools that have not been accommodated in detailed rules and regulations, namely: school management, students, curriculum, learning materials, learning evaluation, and external support [8]. This is indeed factual, because according to the author, the problem of students with the specificities of what can be accepted in public schools, what kind of curriculum and evaluation of learning, have become endless discussions to date. With the presence of a more operational set of regulations and policies, it will at least minimize these technical constraints in the education unit.

Furthermore, these regulations and policies must also regulate Special Assistance Teachers (GPK). Where are they recruited, how are the payrolls, how are they being coached and many other questions. Given the presence of GPK in inclusive schools is very important. So far, the implementation of inclusive education in education units has been hampered, because the school feels unable to provide educational services for children with special needs on the grounds that they do not have teachers capable of handling ABK. Therefore, the provision of GPK must be included in the policy map of both central and provincial and district / city government policies, especially when the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government is enacted. Referring to this law, it can be understood that the provision and guidance of GPK at the SMA / SMK

education level is the duty and authority of the provincial government. Meanwhile, the provision and guidance of GPK at the primary and junior high school levels is the duty and authority of the district / city government.

Indeed, fulfilling the availability of GPK is not a simple problem, especially for provincial and district / city governments that are affected by the moratorium on the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform (MenPANRB). On the other hand, this problem is compounded by the fact that not all regions have tertiary institutions that are ready to produce graduates who are competent to handle ABK so they have to 'import' teachers with special educational backgrounds from other regions.

From this condition, a long-term policy must be born both from the central and provincial levels, namely encouraging higher education institutions, both public and private in each region to open a department or study program and / or make special education a subject that must be given to students / prospective teachers as well as it is also possible that in the early stages it can use a scientific integration pattern with the hope that each prospective teacher from higher education has basic knowledge of special education because special education courses are delivered integratedly with other courses. Then the short-term policy, it is hoped that a policy will provide facilities and opportunities for teachers in public schools through seminars or training on special education. If this policy is maintained and evaluated simultaneously and comprehensively, then the availability of competent teachers to handle ABK in public schools will not be a significant problem.

Based on the problem of regulations and policies in the implementation of inclusive education in public schools, the above indicates that there is a need for acceleration in formulating norms, standards, procedures and criteria (NSPK) for the implementation of inclusive education in schools which at least includes three aspects, namely: SPM) Inclusive Schools; second, the National School Standards (SSN) Inclusion Schools; and third, Technical Guidelines for Inclusive Education [9]. Of course, to answer this requires a serious effort to revitalize the Permendikbud concerning the Implementation of Inclusive Education and if it is deemed urgent it should also be considered to produce a new Permendikbud on inclusive education. In fact, there must be maximum efforts to encourage the birth of a Joint Decree (SKB) of Three Ministers between the Minister of Education and Culture, the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs which will guarantee the implementation of inclusive education in schools and madrasas.

The next problem faced in implementing inclusive education in public schools is the support system. So far, the implementation of inclusive education in public schools seems still exclusive and lacks support. As a result, the implementation of inclusive education in educational units feels meaningless and affects other schools, "do not want to be bothered" to implement inclusive education. Therefore, an inclusive education support system must work. That the implementation of inclusive education in public schools cannot be alone. It requires the presence of social institutions and / or civil society as well as an educational community that has a focus and concern for ABK. This includes special education units and therapy centers as well as ABK services which are expected to act as resource centers for schools that provide inclusive education.

The existence of this community can be initiated by schools that provide inclusive education, parents with children with special needs and special needs communities themselves by involving other elements who act as a forum for deliberation and discussion to find issues of inclusive education and alternative solutions [10]. This community is also expected to encourage policy makers to give concern for the implementation of inclusive education. In fact, in the short term, this community is expected to be able to encourage the birth of a new impression (new stereotype) to the children with special needs, for example by affirming 'Bunda ABK' - such as Bunda PAUD - from the center to the provinces and districts / cities.

More than that, this community is also expected to become a partner of the central, provincial and district / city governments in the effort to collect data on ABK, which of course is done using an accountable Data and Information Technology (PADATI) system [9] [11]. To support the strategic role of this community, the presence of electronic, print and social media should not be neglected so that the movement to care for special needs education becomes a universal movement in Indonesia. If this effort is realized, it will strengthen the existence of children with special needs and the fulfillment of their basic rights, including the right to get a decent and quality education.

3. Conclusion

Rules and regulations guarantee the fulfillment of the right to education for children with special needs. Starting from this, the government and the community prepared a special education unit for ABK. However, special education units are not able to meet the educational needs of children with special needs because the number is limited and is located in the district / city capital, while ABK are scattered in sub-districts and villages. Therefore, an innovative breakthrough is needed, namely implementing inclusive education in public schools which is expected to provide more equitable and quality fulfillment of education rights for children with special needs.

The implementation of inclusive education in public schools is not without obstacles and challenges. Broadly speaking, there are three problems faced in the application of inclusive education, namely: socio-cultural problems which include the belief system of society and parents; regulatory issues, technical policies, and operations of inclusive education; as well as a support system.

These three problems are not without solutions. This means that hope is still there. Therefore parents, the community, policy makers and all educated people must join hands and move together and take their respective roles maximally to solve these problems with alternative solutions, including socializing and strengthening the understanding of inclusive education in addition to ensuring that children with special needs can learn and educated. Policymakers (central and local) must revitalize or if necessary formulate new regulations and policies to respond to technical matters regarding the implementation of inclusive education and utilize the strategic role of the community as a support system and resource center in implementing inclusive education. All these efforts will lead to "strength" to accept children with special needs, provide equal opportunities for them, and appreciate their work.

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