

# The Policy of Inclusive Education in Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

The Policy of Inclusive education plays a crucial role in building an inclusive and equitable society. Quality education obtained by students in general is the same right for children with disabilities. Through PERMENDIKNAS No. 70 in 2009, article 1 explains that the education implementation system provides opportunities for all children with disabilities who have the ability and intelligence or have special talents to attend education in an educational environment together with students in general. However, in practice, many schools that organize inclusive education have not fully implemented the policy. This is due to the absence of guidelines for educators in guiding their students. The purpose of this study is to analyze inclusive education policy in Indonesia. This research uses a literature review with documentary techniques as a means of collecting data from trusted sources. The findings of this study are that in implementing inclusive education policies, qualified resources (budget, teaching staff, and infrastructure) are needed, interpreting and elaborating policies in the form of regulations to formulate policy implementation, preparing plans for several steps in implementation based on time, place and budget, continuously organizing students, budgets, and infrastructure, and providing benefits.

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## INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an education implementation system that provides services and opportunities for all children without exception for persons with disabilities and children with special intelligence and talent potential to participate in education and learning in one environment with other students [1]. Indeed, people with disabilities have the same opportunity to get an education, so that all students can take part in learning in the classes provided in schools. Therefore, the existence of inclusive education has the potential to make a real contribution to every person with disabilities with various disorders. The study of inclusive education cannot be separated from the study of children with special needs. The presence of children with disabilities in the family brings many consequences in handling. It takes mental readiness for parents to handle it [2].

Human rights explain that everyone has the right to life, to education, to health, and to work [3]. In international jurisprudence, the implementation of inclusive education is the 1994 declaration of Salamanca by the world's ministers of education [4]. This declaration emphasizes that as long as possible all children should learn together regardless of the difficulties/differences they may have [5]. In Indonesia, the implementation of inclusive education is guaranteed by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which in its explanation states that the implementation of education for children with disabilities is carried out inclusively in the form of special schools [6].

The world body's attention to persons with disabilities is not just a ceremonial commemoration, right on December 13, 2006 the UN General Assembly issued resolution Number A/61/106 concerning the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) in response to this resolution the Indonesian government signed the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities on March 30, 2007 in New York. The signing contains the seriousness of the Indonesian state to respect, protect, fulfill, and improve the rights of persons with disabilities, which in turn is expected to be able to fulfill the welfare of persons with disabilities [7]–[9].

Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009, Article 1 reads that inclusive education is defined as an education delivery system that provides opportunities for all people with abnormalities (people with disabilities) and have special intelligence and talents to take part in the learning process in an educational environment together with other students [10].

However, the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia is still faced with various obstacles, causing optimization to not be achieved. Lack of supervision from the government, limited human resources and limited infrastructure are the main obstacles that require continuous evaluation and improvement, which must be faced and cause the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia to be not optimal [11]. Very little supervision from the government, limited human resources and limited infrastructure mean that inclusive education needs to be evaluated and improved continuously [12]. The readiness of schools and educators to teach people with disabilities is also a serious concern [13]. To achieve optimal results, the implementation of inclusive education requires support from various parties such as parents, students, accompanying teachers and communities who understand the importance of inclusive education. Thus, services for students with special needs can be maximally improved [14].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive education has emerged as a vital global concern, rooted in the recognition of education as a fundamental human right [6]. Various international declarations, such as the Salamanca Statement (1994) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, have laid the foundation for inclusive education systems that embrace diversity and promote educational equity [4]. In the Indonesian context, Law No. 20 of 2003 and Ministerial Regulation No. 70 of 2009 represent key policy frameworks designed to promote inclusive education practices. Previous literature highlights the dual function of inclusive education: it is both a pedagogical approach and a philosophical commitment to social justice.

Conceptually, inclusive education is grounded in principles of equity, participation, and individualized learning [1]. Theories of social inclusion and constructivist pedagogy emphasize the need for environments that accommodate learners' varied abilities, interests, and backgrounds. Despite its conceptual clarity, the literature also reveals persistent challenges in implementation [8]. These include insufficient teacher training, lack of infrastructure, and social stigma against learners with disabilities.

A gap remains in studies that connect policy provisions with practical outcomes in schools, particularly at the primary level. While policies exist, there is limited analysis of how schools operationalize inclusive practices or how effectively resources are allocated. This research contributes to filling that gap by analyzing the implementation of inclusive education policy in Indonesia, identifying critical constraints, and suggesting targeted strategies for reform.

## METHODOLOGY

The research method used is a qualitative research with a descriptive approach, where the researcher seeks to explain and define an object as it is. Descriptive research does not examine and explain the relationship between variables and test hypothesis. The purpose of this method is to describe inclusive education policies in educational institutions in Indonesia. Data collection in this study used documentation studies. Documentation studies were conducted to collect secondary data relating to inclusive education policies and programs in educational institutions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Definition of Inclusive Education

Inclusive comes from the word inclusion which means special needs. Inclusion is also defined as an approach to building an environment that is open to anyone with diverse backgrounds and conditions, such as: Characteristics, physical conditions, personality, status, ethnicity, culture etc [15]. Etymologically inclusive also comes from the word include which means being part of something, merging into unity. Meanwhile, inclusive education means education for participants with special needs in regular classes. This education uses a different approach in identifying and trying to solve difficulties that arise in the school environment [16]. Inclusive education is an education delivery system that provides opportunities for all students who experience limitations and have intelligence and/or extraordinary talents to attend education or learning in the same educational environment as other students [17].

Inclusive education implements education that unites students with special needs with normal children in general in the implementation of classroom learning [18]. Inclusive education is education that places learners with special needs from mild, moderate to severe levels in the classroom. This shows that the classroom is the right learning place for children/learners with special needs whatever the disorder [19].

Inclusive education has also been explained in QS. Al-Hajj verse 5 which contains the obligation of humans to understand the creatures of Allah SWT that are perfect and not [20]. This is emphasized by the Word of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. about there is no difference between humans and others except their devotion [21]. From these two arguments, it can be understood that Allah SWT does not allow His creature to look down on other people's imperfections, both physical and non-physical. For this reason, for the concept to be successful, it is necessary to have a policy which has an activity plan that guides an organization [22].

Inclusive education is the latest model of education for children with special needs that is officially (in regular classes) then reinforced in the 1994 Salamanca statement at the world conference on Education for the disabled which states that "the basic principle of inclusive education is: as long as possible, all children should learn together without distinguishing the physical and non-physical differences of the child." [23], [24].

Inclusive education aims to: 1) to provide the maximum opportunity for all learners who have physical, emotional, mental and social abnormalities or have the potential for intelligence and / or extraordinary talents to get a quality education according to their needs and abilities; 2) to realize the implementation of education that respects diversity, and is not discriminatory for all learners [25].

### Inclusive Education Model

The Inclusive Education Model according to Wara Kushartanti, she states that there are five models of inclusive schools / education organized in Indonesia, including [26]:

1. Regular classes, Children with disabilities and normal ones learn in regular classes with the application of the same curriculum.
2. Regular classes with clusters, Children with disabilities and normal children learn together in regular classes and are specially grouped.
3. Regular class with cluster and pull out, children with disabilities and normal children learn together in a regular class and have a special group, then are pulled out of the regular class at certain times to study with special mentors.
4. Special class with various integrations, children with disabilities learn in special classes in regular schools, but in certain areas may learn with normal children in regular classes.

5. Full special class, children with disabilities study in a special class in a regular school.

In fact, inclusive education consists of two things: first, inclusive education is the incorporation of regular education and special education into a unified school system to meet the different needs of all learners [27]. Second, inclusive education is not just a method or approach to education, but rather a form of implementation of a philosophy that recognizes diversity among humans who have a single mission to build a better life together.

### **The Implementation Program Inclusive Education In Indonesia**

The inclusive education implementation program in schools is the togetherness of students in the classroom in the same educational environment and services, the togetherness of normal students and children with special needs in the school environment is expected to have a positive influence in internalizing them in school life and outside school [28]. Life outside school requires students with special needs to mingle and mingle with people who have various mindsets.

Inclusive education not only benefits students with special needs, but also has a positive impact on the character building of students who do not have special needs (ordinary) [29]. They can learn to empathize and tolerate and respect the differences that exist in this world. There are several important things that must be considered in implementing inclusive education in schools, namely: First, every child is different (has different abilities, interests, talents, ethnic backgrounds, etc.) Second, every child has the potential to learn. Third, the system of implementing education in schools must be changed to adapt to the needs of all children (including children with special needs) [30], [31]. There are three principles supporting the implementation of effective learning for all learners, among others [32]:

1. Educators set appropriate challenges for all learners, including the less able and more able.
2. Educators respond to learners' diverse needs by creating productive learning environments.

Educators work with their colleagues to combat barriers that interfere with learners' ability to learn [33]. The important aspects that need to be considered in the implementation of inclusive education in schools are as follows:

1. Educators need to understand how to teach students with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
2. Every child has the right to learn, regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other differences.
3. Educators value all learners in the classroom, educators discuss with learners and motivate interaction among learners.
4. In an inclusive learning environment, everyone shares the same vision of how children should learn, work and play together. Because they believe education should be inclusive, fair and non-discriminatory, respecting all cultures.
5. Inclusive learning environments teach life skills and healthy lifestyles.
6. Schools create systems and facilities that are suitable for the different circumstances of children with special needs.

Currently, the implementation of formal education in Indonesia recognizes only two forms, namely regular schools and special schools. Regular schools are exclusively for students who are categorized as "normal". The special schools are exclusively for children with disabilities. However, the increasing concern and awareness of the community in realizing holistic education and accessible to all learners is characterized by the existence of [34]:

1. Declaration of Human Rights in 1948
2. Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989

3. World Conference on Education for All in 1990
4. Equal Opportunities for Children with Disabilities in 1993
5. Salamanca Statement on Inclusive Education in 1994
6. Dakar Commitment on Education for All in 2000.

### **Principles of Inclusive Education For Children With Special Needs**

The main principle that is key to the implementation of inclusive education is that all learners indiscriminately can learn and differences become strengths in developing their potential. Another general principle in the implementation of inclusive education is the presence of learners with special needs in the classroom so that they can participate and be accepted in the education unit environment [35]. In the implementation of inclusive education, the curriculum uses the principle of flexibility so that it can be adjusted according to the conditions, characteristics and needs of learners.

Children with special needs should receive education from an early age. However, educating children who have special needs with physical, mental or social impairments is not the same as educating normal children because it requires different methods and tactics. The aim of this is for children with special needs: to accept their situation, to interact with others, to strive according to their abilities, to have the skills needed, and to be aware as citizens and members of society [36].

The essence of movement patterns to increase the potential of children with special needs is creativity [37]. In addition, the development of specific principles of approach that can be used as a basis in efforts to educate children with special needs are as follows:

1. The principle of compassion, focuses on accepting children as they are and strives for them to live life and life with a usual life like other normal children.
2. The principle of individualized service, in order to educate children with special needs to get a large portion because every child with special needs in the same type and degree has a different unique problem.
3. The principle of readiness, to receive certain lessons, the readiness of children with special needs is needed in getting the lessons to be taught, especially the prerequisite knowledge.
4. The principle of demonstration. The smooth teaching of children with special needs is supported by the use of teaching aids as a medium. in addition to make it easier for teachers to teach, another function of using teaching aids as learning media for children with special needs is to facilitate student understanding of the material presented by the teacher.
5. The principle of motivation focuses more on how to teach and provide evaluations that are tailored to the conditions of children with special needs.
6. The principle of learning and working in groups, is one of the basics of educating children with special needs so that the child as a member of society can get along with the environment without having to feel inferior to normal people.
7. The principle of skills, skills education for children with special needs in addition to functioning selectively, educationally, recreationally, and therapeutically, can also be a provision for later life
8. The principle of planting and perfecting attitudes. Physically and psychologically, the attitude of children with special needs is not good so it needs to be pursued so that they have a good attitude and are not always the concern of others.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud), inclusive education is guided by several key principles. First, it serves as a strategy to broaden access to education and enhance its quality [38]. Inclusive education institutions are designed to accommodate all children, particularly those who may not be served by other educational systems. By employing diverse learning methodologies, inclusive learning models aim to improve educational outcomes while adapting to the unique circumstances of each child. Second, inclusive education emphasizes responsiveness to individual needs, recognizing that every child possesses distinct abilities and requirements, and therefore, educational practices must be tailored accordingly. Third, inclusive education must foster a classroom environment that is welcoming, values diversity, and respects differences among students. Fourth, the implementation of inclusive education should be sustainable and continuous, encompassing all levels of the education system [39]. Finally, the success of inclusive education relies on the active involvement of all relevant educational stakeholders, including educators, administrators, families, and the wider community.

## **Inclusive Education Policy in Indonesia**

Policy comes from the word wise which means always using your mind, clever. While policy means a concept, principle, and basic plan in the implementation of a job, leadership and way of acting. In the world of education, policy means the policy of a government to regulate education in its country. The term policy is very diverse, often interpreted as politics, rules, decision programs, laws, regulations, agreements, conventions, and strategic plans [40]. Broadly speaking, policy is defined as a statement or general understanding that guides thinking in making decisions that have the essence of certain limits in making decisions.

Inclusive education in Indonesia has experienced significant developments in recent years. Several policies and programs have been carried out by the government and various related parties to support the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia [41].

The inclusive education policy refers to the prevailing laws and regulations in Indonesia. The 1945 Constitution Article 28H paragraph (2) explains that everyone is entitled to facilities and special treatment to obtain equal opportunities and benefits in order to achieve equality and justice [42]. The Indonesian government provides several options for educational services for children with special needs as stated in Law No. 2 of 1989 and PP No. 72 of 1991 in article 4 that education for children with special needs, namely extraordinary elementary schools (SDLB) with a minimum length of education of 6 years, extraordinary junior high schools (SLTPLB) at least 3 years and extraordinary secondary schools (SMALB) at least 3 years [23].

Another policy is special mentor teachers, Special Mentor Teachers are teachers who have the competence of S-1 qualifications in Special Education / Extraordinary Education. Special education qualifications in accordance with professional demands that function as a support for regular teachers in providing special education services and/or compensatory interventions, according to the needs of students with special needs in SPPI.

In addition, guidebooks have been developed for inclusive schools, principals, teachers, learners, parents and communities. These books consist of guidelines for identification tools for children with special needs, curriculum development, procurement and development of education personnel, procurement and management of infrastructure, teaching and learning activities, school management and community empowerment. However, in practice there are still many schools that have not received these modules and guidelines. The absence of modules and guidelines in public schools that accept children with disabilities results in unclear educational services for people with disabilities [11].

The Pocket Guide to the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Primary Schools by the Directorate of Primary Schools, Directorate General of Early Childhood Education, Primary Education and Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology in 2021, which contains concepts, support systems, admission of new

students, identification, assessment, individualized education programs, learning accommodations, and facilities and infrastructure for inclusive education in primary schools [19].

Surbakti in Karya, 2022 reveals that the implementation of inclusive education policies includes several things: first, preparing resources (budget, teaching staff and infrastructure). Second, interpreting and elaborating policies in the form of regulations to formulate policy implementation. Third, planning several steps in implementation based on time, place and budget [43]. Fourth, continuous organization of students, budgets and infrastructure facilities. Fifth, providing benefits and regulating behavior towards students and society.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and in-depth study, it can be concluded that inclusive education is an idea that every child has the same right to quality education. The birth of this education aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination, whether based on disorders, ethnic backgrounds, social or other differences. The main goal of inclusive education policy is to integrate students with special needs into the general education environment, so that they can learn together with their peers.

The inclusive education policy has become a key target in the effort to create a non-discriminatory, balanced and sustainable educational environment for all learners, regardless of background, potential or other differences. The policy has far-reaching effects on its recipients, including: one, it promotes a more socially inclusive society by teaching values of tolerance. Two, inclusive education helps learners with disabilities develop their abilities. Three, the implementation of this policy encourages creative and innovative learning methods.

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## Author Contribution

Both authors contributed equally to the development and completion of this research paper. Their roles included conceptual design, literature analysis, data interpretation, manuscript writing, and final editing. The responsibilities were shared collaboratively, and both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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