

**Implementation of Inclusive Education at Elementary School
4 Kasongan Lama**I***Dora**[SDN 4 Kasongan Lama Central Borneo, Indonesia.](#)**Research Article****Citation Information:**

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive schools are educational services provided to children with special needs to ensure they receive an appropriate education. Government policies, as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003, Article 32, and the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 70 of 2009, provide opportunities for children with special needs to receive education in regular schools. In inclusive schools, children with special needs can learn alongside typically developing children and are treated the same as other children. This demonstrates the positive psychological impact of inclusive schools on children with special needs. Various problems that have emerged after more than ten years of implementation in inclusive education practice indicate challenges hindering its implementation in Indonesia. One of these factors is teacher competence, as teachers are not yet fully able to handle children with special needs in regular classrooms. The success of implementing inclusive schools depends on teachers' competence and on collaboration among schools, the government, and parents.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Challenges In Implementing Inclusive Schools



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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the means of expanding access and social mobility in society, both horizontally and vertically. In addition, education is a benchmark for a nation's progress. Education for children with special needs continues to develop over time. Significant changes have been made by the government, schools, students without special needs, parents, and society in general. The juridical foundation reflected in Article 31, paragraph 1, of the 1945 Constitution states that every citizen has the right to obtain an education. In addition, Minister of National Education Regulation Number 70 of 2009 states "Education for All" as the basis for implementing inclusive education for children with special needs and for acceptance by public schools and society, allowing children with special needs to have broader opportunities to receive education like other children and to develop their potential according to their needs.

Education is very important in shaping human development, including the formation of personality and life as a whole. In addition, education has a dynamic influence on preparing human life for the future. Education can also optimally develop the various potentials individuals possess, including physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual, in accordance with their developmental stages and the characteristics of the physical and socio-cultural environment in which they live.

Education is a very important tool for every nation to find its identity and increase competitiveness. Therefore, the state must ensure quality educational services for every citizen, without exception, including those with special needs. To realize education without regard to cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds, the Indonesian government has issued various policies, including shifting the form of education for children with special needs from segregated education to inclusive education.

In Indonesia, it cannot be denied that education for children with special needs has still received insufficient attention and has not yet been handled optimally. Children with special needs are indeed different from other typically developing children in terms of physical condition, mental state, and way of thinking. Even so, children with special needs must receive equal treatment, just as other children do, including in education, because education is a fundamental provision at every stage of a child's life. Not only do typically developing children but also children with special needs need education as a means of survival and competitiveness in their environment.

Inclusive education in a school must accommodate all children, regardless of physical, intellectual, socio-emotional, linguistic, or other conditions, and must include all students, both typical and those with disabilities, in the same school environment and classroom. Inclusive education is an educational service for students with special educational needs in regular schools, including elementary, junior high, senior high, and vocational schools, as well as those with disabilities, slow learning, or other learning difficulties.

Inclusive schools are a metamorphosis of human culture. Every human being is equal, has the same rights, and has the same opportunities to develop and obtain education for a better continuation of life. Regardless of background, everyone has the right to receive proper and equal education. Inclusive education is a pathway for providing education to children with special needs without discrimination, affirming that everyone has the right to proper education. Inclusive education is also one effort to eliminate barriers for these students while simultaneously increasing educational opportunities for all people, including students with special needs.

Inclusive education is education that includes children with special needs alongside typically developing children in regular schools, so that they are not separated from their environment as much as possible. By providing equal opportunities for children with special needs to obtain education and instruction, the gap in educational participation between typically developing children and children with special needs can be reduced. The expectation that they can attend public schools shows that children with special needs obtain their right to education. Thus, the concept of inclusive education means that children with special needs receive educational services tailored to their needs without discrimination and can participate in all educational programs.

SD Negeri 4 Kasongan Lama, as one of the Inclusive Education Provider Schools in Katingan Regency since 2022, has sought to provide equal opportunities for every child to receive an education, regardless of their condition. At the beginning of its implementation, SD Negeri 4 Kasongan Lama did not yet have special education teachers. Teachers were still not able to prepare individualized learning programs based on identification and assessment, and there was also no suitable assessment system to evaluate the learning progress of students with special needs.

This study is inseparable from previous studies on the research focus. Research by Cholid Baedowi found that direct handling by educational personnel who are experts in their field is necessary to avoid creating new problems for students with special needs in schools. Research by Niga Anggarani Pratiwi found that collaboration among educators is needed to support students with special needs, and that schools need to conduct outreach to educators on inclusive education. Research by Titis Madyaning Ratri revealed that parental participation in implementing inclusive education in schools is needed to address and overcome the obstacles schools face.

The purpose of this study is to describe the regulatory foundation, identify the implementation of learning, and develop a classroom management model with the hope of fostering tolerance for others, encouraging understanding that differences are natural and how to respect those differences, reducing discriminatory attitudes toward certain groups, training individuals to think openly, and stimulating development and instilling character values in children.

Based on the results of previous research and studies conducted by earlier researchers, it can be concluded that this study places greater emphasis on how inclusive education is implemented holistically, including the roles and collaboration among teachers, outreach conducted by schools, and parental participation, all of which can help students with special needs obtain quality, proper, and appropriate education in accordance with their needs and abilities.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. This research was conducted for approximately two weeks, from July 22 to August 2, 2024, at SD Negeri 4 Kasongan Lama, Katingan Hilir District, Katingan Regency. The subjects involved in this research were homeroom teachers and special assistant teachers (GPK). The method chosen in this research was qualitative. The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation. This study used a purposive sampling technique. The data were analyzed using several steps according to the theory of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data.

1. Data Condensation

The stage carried out by the researcher was data condensation. At this stage, the researcher sorted the important data collected in the field. The data were selected or summarized to obtain key information in accordance with the study's objectives. The researcher sorted through important information from various data collected through observation and interview methods. The data were selected according to the required grid and referred to the objectives of the research. The data obtained could help the researcher take the next steps.

2. Data Display

At the data display stage, the data were presented in narrative form based on the researcher's findings. A collection of data or information presented provides the possibility for drawing conclusions and taking action. Therefore, presenting the data in a detailed manner reduces errors in interpretation and makes it easier for the researcher to draw conclusions. The presentation of research results was written from general to specific. This can make it easier for readers to focus on the problem's results and develop a systematic way of thinking.

3. Conclusion Drawing

The conclusion-drawing stage in this study had to address the problem formulation prepared from the beginning. Findings in the field may take the form of descriptions or depictions in the form of interactive relationships, hypotheses, or theories. The conclusions in this study were linked to the theories described in the theoretical review. Conclusion drawing was conducted inductively, in which the researcher presented various specific problems, presented evidence and examples of facts found in the field, and ended with a general statement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In implementing inclusive education in a school, the school must be able to accommodate all children, regardless of physical, intellectual, socio-emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. Inclusive education is a development-related approach aimed at meeting the learning needs of all children without distinction or separation. Based on field findings from observations and interviews with homeroom teachers at SD Negeri 4 Kasongan Lama and the special assistant teacher (GPK), the challenges in implementing inclusive education at SD Negeri 4 Kasongan Lama were identified as follows:

Challenges in the Implementation of Inclusive Education at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama

One of the obstacles to implementing inclusive education at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama is the still-limited understanding among teachers in handling and assisting children with special needs, both in direct assistance and in applying special learning for them in the classroom.

Teachers at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama still receive insufficient specialized training in handling inclusive education. Teacher training is a key component in the success of inclusive education. Without adequate training, teachers may not have the skills or knowledge needed to face the needs of students with special needs. This is in line with the theory of Teacher Efficacy, which holds that teachers' belief in their ability to influence student learning outcomes is crucial to the success of inclusive education. Some teachers at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama have attended training on inclusive education, but this is still considered less than optimal because the training was conducted online.

SDN 4 Kasongan Lama still has only one special assistant teacher (GPK) who has received training and mentoring from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. In addition, the special assistant teacher at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama also serves as a Christian Religious Education subject teacher. This is considered insufficient and creates its own challenges, given that the GPK also carries out the main duty of teaching Christian Religious Education, in addition to guiding seven children with special needs at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama. With a sufficient number of special assistant teachers, assistance for children with special needs can be properly implemented and delivered.

Another obstacle and challenge is the still-limited role, support, and awareness of parents or guardians in acknowledging their child's condition as a child with special needs. Honesty from parents or guardians about the child's condition is essential to ensure the child is treated patiently and appropriately. By providing valuable information about the child's needs, parents or guardians help create a supportive learning environment at both school and home. Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner emphasizes the importance of environmental support for the student, including the family, for optimal development.

Periodic evaluation and adjustment are very important in ensuring the success of inclusive programs. The concept of Responsive Teaching suggests that instruction must be adaptive to individual student needs, requiring continuous assessment and adjustment to ensure the effectiveness of inclusive programs. Interviews with Bu Milae, S.Pd, a classroom teacher, indicated that it is important to evaluate the implementation of inclusive education in a school, because through evaluation the school can determine the extent to which the inclusive education program has been successful. Based on the challenges above and the results of interviews with several homeroom teachers at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama and the special assistant teacher (GPK), the following solutions were explained so that the implementation of inclusive education at SD Negeri 4 Kasongan Lama can run well:

The implementation of inclusive education at SD Negeri 4 Kasongan Lama requires adjustments to the curriculum and teaching methods to meet students' needs better. These adjustments include:

a. Adaptation of Teaching Materials

Interviews with classroom teacher Bu Mona Ocktavia, S.Pd, indicated that textbooks and other learning materials need to be converted into accessible formats, such as large-print, audio, and visual materials. This is so that every student at school

can receive the same learning system. This is in line with research conducted by Wahyuno which states that in order to overcome the difficulty of students with special needs in receiving lesson materials, regular curricula should be modified according to the ability level of students with special needs, so that the lesson materials for one student are not necessarily weighted the same as for another student, even though the Competency Standards (SK) and Basic Competencies (KD) are the same.

b. Differentiated Learning Methods

The implementation of differentiated learning and the use of various teaching strategies to accommodate students' learning styles and needs, such as project-based learning, the use of visual aids, and collaborative learning, needs to be carried out in schools that implement inclusive education. This is based on interviews with Bu Atma Rianti, S.Pd, because differentiated learning focuses on the needs, interests, and learning styles of individual students. Teachers become facilitators who help students reach their full potential, and students are involved in the learning process and given choices to learn in ways they prefer. This statement is in line with research indicating that the use of differentiated learning strategies with varied approaches has a positive impact on students. Students become enthusiastic and highly motivated to learn when methods are adjusted to their needs and preferences. They are actively involved in the learning process and show significant improvement in understanding the material. Accommodation of individual differences also fosters an inclusive learning environment and builds students' self-confidence in engaging with the material being taught.

1. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Effective teacher training is very important for implementing inclusive education in schools because it can improve educators' capacity to organize inclusive education. The intended training includes:

Inclusive Learning Strategies

The application of learning strategies such as individualized instruction and inclusive classroom management greatly helps students with special needs achieve learning objectives; encourages student collaboration and teamwork through group projects, discussions, or other team-based activities; uses learning technology; and creates safe spaces for students. Various inclusive learning strategies can be learned by attending relevant training programs, according to an interview with Bu Milae, a classroom teacher at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama.

Previous research states that a learning strategy is a learning activity that must be carried out by both teachers and students to achieve learning objectives effectively and efficiently. Thus, a learning strategy is a set of interdependent components that work together to achieve goals.

2. Special Assistant Teachers (GPK)

Special assistant teachers are teachers who have a background in special education or extraordinary education, or who have received training in special education and are assigned to inclusive schools. Special assistant teachers conduct initial and continuous evaluations to identify the specific needs of each student with disabilities or special needs. They collect data through observation, tests, and interaction with students with special needs. According to an interview with Mr. Yeprianto, S.Pd.K, one of the Christian Religious Education teachers and the special assistant teacher at SDN 4 Kasongan Lama, the role of special assistant teachers in inclusive education is very helpful in supporting the success of students with special educational needs in regular educational settings. Special assistant teachers have an important function in creating an inclusive and effective educational environment for all students, regardless of their abilities or special needs. Special assistant teachers are core personnel in the inclusive education system, serving as educators who provide educational services to children with special needs receiving education in schools or general educational institutions.

3. Support and Collaboration

Collaboration provides opportunities for teachers to share knowledge, skills, and experiences with one another. For students, collaboration provides opportunities to receive more support and more varied educational experiences. A collaborative system can also make teachers' tasks easier. The success of inclusive education also depends on support and collaboration among various parties.

Parental support in providing complete and accurate information and source data about the child and the child's needs can also support the success of inclusive programs. Parents also act as educators for children in daily life outside school hours. In addition, schools can collaborate with psychologists, therapists, and educational specialists to provide the additional support students need. Such additional support includes helping to identify the learning types and styles of students with special needs and providing regular assistance. Bu Mama Dewi, S.Pd stated in her interview that support and collaboration in implementing inclusive education in schools have a major effect on the development of children with special needs. Through collaboration among teachers, schools, and parents, children with special needs can be properly supported. This is in accordance with previous research indicating that collaboration between parents and teachers is essential for shaping and improving inclusive education. The involvement of parents is itself a factor that can encourage and shape the development of inclusive education

in a school. Parents of children with special needs need to be directly involved in every decision-making process, starting from school placement to collaboration with the school.

4. Evaluation and Program Adjustment

Routine evaluation needs to be carried out to assess the program's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments, such as monitoring student progress to ensure they benefit from the teaching methods used. An interview with Bu Utari Damayanti, S.Pd stated that corrective actions need to involve adjustments to teaching methods to improve the effectiveness of inclusive programs. Previous research states that evaluation is a process of providing information that can be used as a basis for determining the value and usefulness of objectives achieved, design, implementation, and impact, in order to assist decision-making and accountability, and to improve understanding of the phenomena involved.

CONCLUSION

Inclusive education in schools aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or special needs, have equal opportunities to learn and thrive in a supportive environment. Implementing inclusive education involves several important aspects:

1. The curriculum and teaching methods must be adaptable to meet the needs of different types of students. This includes the use of diverse teaching materials, differentiated learning approaches, and fair assessments.
2. Teachers require specialized training to understand and manage the diverse needs of students. Additional support, such as teaching assistants or special education specialists, can assist in implementation.
3. Special education teachers play a key role in implementing inclusive education in a school. Special education teachers serve as primary supporters for students with special needs and as collaborative partners with classroom teachers.
4. Family involvement is crucial. Schools must actively communicate with parents to understand students' needs and provide the necessary support.
5. Implementing inclusive education requires an effective monitoring and evaluation system to assess student progress and the effectiveness of the approaches used. Continuous improvement based on feedback and evaluation results is key to success.

By implementing these principles, schools can create an inclusive environment that not only supports students' academic success but also promotes their social and emotional development.

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