



Implementation of Inclusive Education at Elementary Schools During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Received: 5 April 2022; Revised: 28 May 2022; Accepted: 14 June 2022

Abstract: Education must be open, regardless of race, ethnicity, or characteristics, for a student with a disability. Inclusive education is an alternative that is facilitated by the government to reduce discrimination so that children with special needs can obtain a quality education. However, over time the implementation of inclusive education has been hampered by several obstacles, especially with the current state of the Covid-19 pandemic. Currently, there are still many schools providing inclusive education that do not have special assistant teachers, and there is not even a special budget to provide inclusive education. This study aims to examine and describe the implementation of inclusive education at the Payakumbuh City Elementary School during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research is a descriptive-analytic study, and data collection techniques were carried out using observation and interviews. The result of the study found that the implementation of inclusive education at the Payakumbuh City elementary schools had not been running by the criteria for implementing inclusive education. This is due to the absence of a dedicated budget for providing inclusive education, teachers' misunderstandings regarding the characteristics and needs of students with special needs, limited facilities that accommodate the needs of students with special needs, and pandemic conditions that make the learning process less effective. Therefore, these obstacles in the implementation of inclusive education must be overcome immediately, local governments can consider holding socialization in schools, to provide understanding to teachers, because they are the ones who will teach students with special needs.

Keywords: inclusive education, children with special needs, covid-19 pandemic

How to Cite: Jannah, I., & Hermanto. (2022). Implementation of inclusive education at elementary schools during the covid-19 pandemic. *Jurnal Prima Edukasia, 10(2)*, 171-179. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21831/jpe.v10i2.48884>



Introduction

Education is a basic right for all individuals and becomes a strong foundation for lifelong learning, including for children with special needs. Education must be open to all, regardless of certain racial, ethnic, or ethnic backgrounds, and regardless differences. This is in line with Law number 20 of 2003 Article 5 Paragraph 1, which states that every citizen has the same right to obtain an education. It is also stated in the 1944 Constitution that every citizen has the right to obtain an education and the government is obliged to provide facilities that support the continuity of the education process.

The presence of children with special needs around us automatically requires educational services that are following their needs, so that they can develop their potential to the fullest. However, developing the potential of children with special needs to the fullest is not an easy thing. Supporting resources are needed, a friendly environment, operational costs, and others are needed (Efendi, 2018). The alternative that is facilitated by the government to support education for children with special needs is the inclusive education model, which is one form of realization that Indonesian citizens can get the same education. Dreyer (2017), that inclusive education is a strategy to provide quality education for all students through access to a meaningful education.

Inclusive education means that all children learn together in the classroom, which is a key factor in the implementation of inclusive education including implementation at the school and classroom level such as school reviews and plans, by training and supporting all teachers in inclusive practices, providing flexibility in curriculum, as well as coordinating with other aspects of society (Schuelka, 2012). The implementation of inclusive education is marked by the absence of discriminatory attitudes, as well as providing facilities and a sense of comfort to children with special needs, and many things need to be



prepared in the implementation of inclusive education, one of which is the abilities and skills of educators.

According to article 2 of the Minister of National Education No.70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive education, it is explained that the purpose of inclusive education is to provide the widest opportunity for all students who have physical, emotional, mental, and social disabilities to obtain proper education and according to their needs, and the abilities it has. And create education providers who respect the differences of all students. Kustawan (2012), also argues that in the implementation of inclusive education of courses there are problems that hinder the process of implementing inclusive education, one of which is the unavailability of special assistant teachers. For this reason, schools must prepare and minimize these problems so that the inclusive education system can run according to its objectives.

Indonesia started to organize inclusive education since the issuance of the circular letter of the Ministry of National Education in 2003 which was later strengthened by Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009 concerning inclusive education. Following up on Permendiknas No.70, Payakumbuh City located in West Sumatra Province declared to be an inclusive city supported by Mayor Regulation No. 74 of 2013. Inclusive education in Payakumbuh is a pilot project school, and currently, all elementary schools in Payakumbuh City are required to implement inclusive education and are required to receive children with special needs who enroll in elementary school.

The central government through the Ministry of Education appreciates Payakumbuh City in the form of assistance to build supporting infrastructure, namely the establishment of the Payakumbuh Special Schools Center in 2013. The Special School Center is a training center for teachers in West Sumatra who will teach children with special needs and make Payakumbuh City a reference for other regions in implementing inclusive education. The sustainability of inclusive education in several Payakumbuh City elementary schools has recently received less attention, even though some schools do not have special assistant teachers, and accessibility for children with special needs is less attention. Limited funds for the implementation of inclusive education are also inhibiting factors for the sustainability of the inclusive education process.

Other problems that occur are found in many schools' inclusive school organizers, namely many children with special needs who feel discriminated against as well as in some schools' accessibility for children with special needs is not noticed. Based on this problem, ideally inclusive education according to the index for inclusion proposed by Tony and Ainscow (2005), three dimensions must be considered, namely creating an inclusive culture, producing inclusive policies, and developing inclusive practices. Based on the three dimensions mentioned in several indicators in the implementation of inclusive education, namely all students respect each other, help each other, and every student is treated equally. And there are several indicators to produce inclusive policies including building school buildings that can be accessed by every student.

Currently, at the end of 2019, a new virus was found, namely a new type of corona, and the disease is called Covid-19, at first, the virus was first discovered in the Wuhan area, China, and spread throughout the world. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has issued a policy to limit activities outside the home, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the world of education. So that the learning process is redirected to distance learning or learning from home.

Based on current conditions, research questions were raised, namely 1) How was the inclusive education policy implemented at the Payakumbuh City elementary schools during the Covid-19? 2) Is education for children with special needs by their needs and potential? 3) What are the obstacles to implementing inclusive education in elementary schools during the Covid-19 pandemic? The results of this study will provide answers to basic problems related to the implementation of inclusive education during the Covid-19 pandemic. So that it can be used as a reference in developing the implementation of inclusive education both for local governments and for schools that provide inclusive education. And children with special needs get the right and quality education according to their needs and potential.

As for research related to the implementation of inclusive education policies during the pandemic, one of them is as researched by (Asri et al., 2021), this study aims to describe the types of disabilities faced by students in inclusive schools and the challenges faced by teachers in early reading learning for students with special needs in inclusive schools during the Covid-19 pandemic, which was conducted in 12 inclusive schools in Magetan Regency, Indonesia. Teachers at the inclusive school found many obstacles they faced in conducting initial learning for students with special needs, and the Covid-19 pandemic situation became a challenge for teachers at the Magetan Regency inclusive school.

These obstacles include not being able to do distance learning early because of equipment constraints, not all students can use distance learning applications on their cellphones, and some don't have cellphones.

Methods

The type of research method chosen is descriptive analysis, which describes and provides an overview of the implementation of inclusive education in Payakumbuh City Elementary school. This research was conducted in 2021 during the Covid-19 Pandemic. While the places chosen in this study were four elementary schools in Payakumbuh City is a public elementary school of 33, 35, 61, and 14 in Payakumbuh City. The reason for choosing the research site is a recommendation and consideration from the Payakumbuh City education office because it continues to carry out inclusive education. This study seeks to examine, describe, and describe data on the implementation of inclusive education in Payakumbuh City elementary schools.

The subjects in this study were the principal, the class teacher who taught students with special needs, and special assistant teachers. The subject involved in this study consisted of four schools providing inclusive education, 4 principals, 2 special assistant teachers, 5 classroom teacher, 4 students with special needs, and 4 regular students.

Data collection techniques used are in the form of observation and interviews. The type of observation carried out is participatory observation, where observations made are actively involved directly in various things being observed. The interview technique carried out is in the form of a guided free interview where the questions have given are not fixed on the interview guide, and are developed based on the conditions and situations in the field. Data analysis was carried out using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and concluding. It is a process of focusing data in the category of implementing inclusive education during the Covid-19 Pandemic and presenting data systematically, to find clarity of problems and to answer research problems.

Results and Discussion

Result

Inclusive education is an educational service by provides equal opportunities to children with special needs to obtain education and develop their potential, and schools must accommodate all students. In the implementation of inclusive education, there are several factors' inhibitors and support. Factor inhibitors are factors that hinder the achievement of predetermined goals while supporting factors are factors in the achievement of goals with optimal results.

The implementation of inclusive education experiences many obstacles and challenges in the implementation, the obstacles and efforts faced in each region are certainly not the same. One of them is in Payakumbuh City which was 33 State Elementary Schools providing inclusive education spread across various sub-districts, but in this study taken from 4 Elementary Schools based on the recommendations of the Payakumbuh City Education Office, complete data on the number of students with special needs in these 4 Elementary Schools can be presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of students with special needs

No.	Elementary schools	Class	Types of students with special needs	The number of students
1.	SDN 33 Payakumbuh	I	Speech Delay	2
			Autism	1
		II	ADHD	1
			Slow Learner	1
		III	Slow Learner	2
			Deaf	1
			Autism	1
			Slow Learner	1
2.	SDN 35 Payakumbuh	II	Slow Learner	2
			Slow Learner	1
		III	Slow Learner	1
			Slow Learner	1
3.	SDN 61 Payakumbuh	I	Difficulty Learning	1
			Autism	1

		II	Difficulty Learning	2
		III	Difficulty Learning	2
		IV	Difficulty Learning	1
			Slow Learner	1
		V	Difficulty Learning	2
			Slow Learner	1
			Autism	1
		VI	Slow Learner	2
4.	SDN 14 Payakumbuh	IV	Slow Learner	1
		V	Slow Learner	2

Table 1 shows the number of students with special needs in elementary schools providing inclusive education in Payakumbuh City, while at SDN 33 there are 10 students with special needs, at SDN 35 there are 3 students with special needs, and at SDN 61 there are 14 students with special needs, and SDN 14 has 3 students with special needs. The following are the results of the research:

1. SDN 33 Payakumbuh

Is one of the first inclusive education provider schools in Payakumbuh City which is in East Payakumbuh subdistrict, West Sumatera, and is still running today. In this school, there are 10 students with special needs and 1 special assistant teacher. Based on an interview with school principals, the implementation of inclusive education at this school is still being carried out even though there is no financial assistance specifically for the implementation of inclusive education. However, the school still accepts students with special needs even though there is only one special assistant teacher.

Currently, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, Payakumbuh City is in the yellow zone, so the learning process is limited face-to-face but still pays attention to health protocols. Based on the results of observations made in grade 1 SDN 33, there are 3 students with special needs who are taught by Mrs. Liza as a homeroom teacher. In class, Mrs. Liza uses interesting learning media for students with special needs, such as using a chalkboard to teach students to read. Although there is no specific method of teaching in the classroom, at the end of the class, the teacher with a special assistant teacher gathers students who have difficulty by providing additional lessons by repeating the lesson.

The assessment process has not yet been carried out because it is constrained by the current pandemic conditions, but previously in 2019, an assessment was carried out by a psychologist. Because there is no longer a budget for the implementation of inclusive education, the next assessment process will be carried out by a special assistant teacher. The inclusive program held at SDN 33 is quite helped by the presence of special assistant teachers, and the teachers are also provided with learning about inclusive education. As stated by Vaughn and Schuman in the Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Luar Biasa (2008), the learning model used in this school is the pull-out system, wherein this class children with special needs study together with other regular children, but at a certain time, they are taken out of the classroom, to get services from special assistant teachers.

This school had paid attention to accessibility for students with special needs, namely by eliminating the barriers in the schoolyard, but due to the lack of budget for the implementation of inclusive education, it has not been able to provide safe toilets for students with special needs. This school also accepts all students with special needs who register and provides the same learning opportunities as regular students but is constrained by the lack of special assistant teachers with a fairly large number of students with special needs.

2. SDN 35 Payakumbuh

Is one of the schools providing inclusive education in Payakumbuh City which is in the South Payakumbuh subdistrict. At SDN 35 there are 4 students with special needs with learning difficulties. Based on interviews conducted with principals at this school, they only accept children with special needs with learning barriers, because there are no supporting factors to carry out inclusive education, nor are there special assistant teachers. However, facilities and infrastructure have been provided because in 2013-2015 this school held inclusive education, namely, there is a special room for students with special needs.

Based on the results of observations made in grade 2, some students have learning difficulties who are in the same class as other regular students and are accompanied by Mrs. Fatma as the homeroom teacher. In learning, there are no special learning methods and media given to students who experience these obstacles however the teacher will repeat if students do not understand the lessons given and even

be assisted by their peers. Even classroom teachers also provide additional learning outside of school hours.

In grade 3 2 students have difficulty in learning, namely dyslexia or difficulty in reading, in this class the class teacher is Mr. Hafiz. In learning, there is no special method used, but the classroom teacher always provides repetition in the material given to students with special needs. The obstacles faced by class teachers based on the results of interviews were that the class teacher did not understand the characteristics of students with special needs and was quite overwhelmed because these students often interfered with their classmates, as well as the short learning hours during the pandemic so the learning process was not optimal.

The learning method at SDN 35 has not fully used inclusive learning methods because there are still many lessons that have not been adapted to the needs of students, and there is no assessment process for students with special needs. This is because this school does not have special assistant teachers, or trained teachers so the learning process for children with special needs is not optimal. The learning model implemented by Mrs. Fatma and Mr. Hafiz is clear evidence that the limited number of special assistant teachers is the main obstacle to implementing inclusive education. This is to the opinion (Jarvis et al., 2022) that students with a graduate majoring in Special Education have a higher level of motivation and value for psychological readiness to work in an inclusive education environment.

According to Kustawan (2012), in implementing inclusive education several things can be designed by schools to improve teacher competence, namely understanding the concept of inclusive education, understanding the identification and assessment process for children with special needs, understanding how to provide interventions for children with special needs, understanding that there is diversity among students, can develop curricula, take a student-centered approach so that students can be more active in learning, assessment of learning outcomes, the introduction of special programs or individual learning programs for students with special needs, development of adaptive learning media, and management in inclusive education. Based on the design to improve teacher competence, it is hoped that in its implementation teachers will better understand how the learning process is needed by students with special needs, so that learning objectives can be achieved properly and maximally.

3. SDN 61 Payakumbuh

It is one of the elementary schools in Payakumbuh City that provides inclusive education which is in the North Payakumbuh subdistrict. At SDN 61 there are 14 students with special needs and there is one special assistant teacher, at this school there is no special quota for students with special needs, and accepts every student with special needs who registers at SDN 61. Based on interviews with school principals, the implementation of inclusive education at SDN 61 is quite going well, because there is a collaboration with the SLB Center in providing training to teachers who will teach students with special needs. The assessment process is also assisted by a psychologist, but because there is no special budget from the government for the implementation of inclusive education, for now, the assessment process is carried out by special assistant teachers. And even though there is no financial assistance provided by the government, schools are still trying to budget funds from schools so that inclusive education can continue to be implemented.

Facilities and infrastructure are important factors in the implementation of inclusive education, and at the same time become a supporting factor in the education process. The results of observations at SDN 61 for facilities and infrastructure that support inclusive education are sufficient, in that school, there is a special room to carry out the assessment process and to accommodate students with special needs who are difficult to control in the classroom, this special room is called the resource room.

In grade 4 2 students have learning difficulties and study in the same class as regular students and are taught by Mrs. Yenda as the homeroom teacher. In learning, there are no special methods and media, and the assessment remains the same as other regular students. However, the provision of learning to students who have learning difficulties will be assisted by a special assistant teacher. Based on interviews with homeroom teachers, they revealed the difficulties they faced, only because children with special needs were quite active in learning, so the teacher was a little overwhelmed in answering any questions asked by students.

The implementation of inclusive education at SDN 61 uses the national standard curriculum set by the government, namely the 2013 curriculum. average. However, in learning, it is still adjusted to the ability of students. Based on an interview with a special assistant teacher, namely Mr. Petrus regarding the role of the special assistant teacher at the school. In addition to assisting students with special needs,

special assistant teachers are also tasked with conducting assessments and developing individual programs for students with special needs.

The learning model in this school uses a pull-out system, where if students with special needs have difficulty, or are difficult to control at any time in the classroom, they will be brought to the resource room for guidance by a special assistant teacher. Learning planning at SDN 61 is in the form of a syllabus and Learning Program Plan (RPP) for all students. For students with special needs, an Individual Learning Program (PPI) plan is applied which is prepared by a special assistant teacher, this is because the special assistant teacher is more understanding in preparing the PPI. Before the PPI is applied, it is necessary to identify the condition of students with special needs. This process is called an assessment, to find out his abilities which are carried out at the time of registration of new students. Furthermore, observations were made during the learning process by observations by the class teacher, and finally, the PPI will be made based on the results of these observations and assessments.

4. SDN 14 Payakumbuh

Is one of the schools providing inclusive education in Payakumbuh City which is in the West Payakumbuh subdistrict. In this school, there are 3 students with special needs with learning difficulties who are in the same class as regular students. Based on interviews with school principals, for the implementation of inclusive education, there is no budget or financial assistance provided by the government, and there are no special accompanying teachers, so it is constrained to organize inclusive education, at SDN 14 currently during the pandemic carrying out face-to-face learning is limited.

This school is not yet able to accept students with special needs, but it can be considered for students who have learning disabilities. Efforts are given to children with learning difficulties, namely providing additional hours after school for students who have difficulty and providing tutoring outside of school. Based on interviews conducted with the 5th-grade teacher, Mrs. Lisa, the learning process of children with special and regular needs are in the same class, in learning there is no special method given to children with special needs, but if children have difficulty, they will be given the repetition of lessons as well as assistance by his colleagues.

Based on the implementation of inclusive education carried out in SDN 14, it has not yet fully used the inclusive learning method. Limited funds and the absence of special assistant teachers are of inhibiting factors for the implementation of inclusive education. And the teacher's misunderstanding about the characteristics of students with special needs causes students with special needs to not get an education according to their needs. Without a Special Assistant Teacher, if there is a problem for students with special needs, the class teacher is not able to overcome it, in the end, the teacher will teach according to what he knows. Gibbs and Bozaid (2021), so it does not make it if the general education teacher feels less ready to serve students with special needs, because they have not received the training needed to develop skills for students with special needs.

The success of the implementation of effective inclusive education is highly dependent on the educators, namely the teachers, therefore it is very important to understand the acceptance of teachers in inclusive schools (Welchons & McIntyre, 2015). According to Hermanto (2022), in the setting of inclusive education, planning, implementation, and evaluation must be based on the results of the assessment of students with special needs. And effective teachers in inclusive education settings are teachers who understand and care about their students so that they know their needs of these students. In addition, according to Aldabas (2020), the teaching experience of teachers can influence teachers' perceptions of their readiness to teach in inclusive classes, teachers who have experience teaching students with special needs to show a high level of confidence.

Based on this description regarding the implementation of inclusive education in 4 Payakumbuh City Elementary Schools, it can be answered from the research questions described in table 2 below.

Table 2. Research result

No	Elementary schools	Inclusive education policy	Accommodation for students with special needs	Obstacles
1.	SDN 33 Payakumbuh	In the implementation of inclusive education teaching staff collaborates with students to motivate	By using interesting learning media, as well as repetition of learning after school hours by the teacher to optimize the	The absence of a budget of funds for the implementation of inclusive education is constrained because

		students, as well as school buildings, are accessible for students with special needs.	potential of students with special needs	Pandemic Covid-19 cannot assess by cooperating with a psychologist, and the lack of special assistant teachers for many students with special needs.
2.	SDN 35 Payakumbuh	Inclusive education has not been going well because of the lack of understanding of staff regarding the implementation of inclusive education	The need for students with learning difficulties is not by their needs, but the teacher has tried to provide additional hours of learning after school	The absence of a special supervisor teacher, the absence of a budget of funds to organize inclusive education, as well as the teacher's insignificance regarding the characteristics of students with special needs.
3.	SDN 61 Payakumbuh	The implementation of inclusive education has been running quite well, the teacher is equipped with knowledge about learning for students with special needs	Accommodation for students with special needs has been considered by the existence of a special assistant teacher and the existence of source space for students with special needs.	The lack of budget for the implementation of inclusive education, and the lack of special assistant teachers, are constrained to hold training for teachers because of the Pandemic Covid-19 situation.
4.	SDN 14 Payakumbuh	Not running by the characteristics of inclusive education, because there is no budget for the implementation of inclusive education, as well as teachers' lack of understanding of the implementation of inclusive education.	Accommodation for the rest with slow learning is not to their needs, but the teacher has tried to provide additional learning outside of school hours to accommodate the potential of students with special needs.	The absence of a budget for the implementation of inclusive education, the absence of special assistant teachers, as well as teachers' lack of understanding of the characteristics of students with special needs.

Discussion

The implementation of inclusive education in the four elementary schools based on research findings has not fully met the requirements of an ideal inclusive school. Because there are several obstacles such as not fully meeting the needs of students with special needs, there are rejections of students with special needs by some schools because they do not have special assistant teachers. This is in line with Barton (2003), that inclusive education is not only just placing students with special needs into regular schools, but how are efforts made so that students with special needs get education according to their needs.

Policies in this context relate to school architecture, infrastructure for learning, support for teachers and students, as well as internal school policies and curriculum. From the findings, it was found that Elementary Schools 61 and 33 had paid attention to accessibility for children with special needs, as well as providing resource rooms. However, other schools are constrained by the absence of a special budget for the implementation of inclusive education and the lack of understanding of education providers on inclusive education policies. Based on the problems and constraints on the implementation of inclusive education in Payakumbuh City, it is hoped that the local government will focus on strengthening an inclusive culture, designing policies, and implementing inclusive education. And the government can consider holding outreach or training in schools regarding the implementation of inclusive education.

Stepanova et al., (2018), in the implementation of inclusive education it is necessary to collaborate with organizations engaged in education, media organizations, and organizations that have the necessary resources to conduct training. Lee et al., (2015), also argue that given the importance of the teacher's role in the implementation of inclusive education, several factors that underline the role of teachers for children with special needs include teacher training, the types of children with special needs

encountered, teacher knowledge about children with special needs, and the ability of teachers, experienced in teaching children with special needs, as well as their professional role.

Teachers who teach in inclusive schools support the concept of inclusive education, but the challenge is the readiness of the teacher to apply the inclusive education, this is due to the absence of training on the implementation of inclusive education and the lack of resources for teaching students with special needs (Savolainen & Engelbrecht, 2018). In general, training is a solution for educators to meet the needs of students with special needs, and with their training become more trained and understand the characteristics of students with special needs (Morina & Perera, 2020). In addition to success in the implementation of inclusive education, a collaboration between teachers and parents is needed to accommodate the needs of students with special needs (Zagona et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Inclusive education is an educational service that provides opportunities for students with special needs to have the opportunity to get a quality education and minimize discrimination against students with special needs. Theoretically, the results of this study provide theoretical knowledge about providing learning for students with special needs fairly and equitably, as well as strategies for providing learning for students with special needs. Practically, the results of this study provide information that the ideal of inclusive education has not been implemented in Payakumbuh City, because of the many obstacles that have not been resolved, one of which is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of the policy of implementing inclusive education in Payakumbuh City, it is not by the characteristics of inclusive education described by Booth Tony, Ainscow Mel, (2005) in the Inclusion Index, as well as the needs and potential of students with special needs not yet fully by the potential of students with special needs. And the results of this study are expected to be a consideration for the government to immediately take policies to overcome these obstacles.

Another finding is that inclusive education is still experiencing many obstacles, both internal in terms of problems with educators, schools, and facilities, as well as external ones originating from government policies. These obstacles in the implementation of inclusive education must be addressed immediately because inclusive education is a forum for children with special needs to obtain a quality education.

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