The Application of Inclusive Education Services in Shaping The Character of Students

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Inclusive education is one of the educational approaches that guarantees the learning rights of all students, including children with special needs (ABK). However, in practice, the implementation of inclusive education services in primary schools still faces various challenges, especially limited human resources, and understanding of school residents. This study aims to describe the application of inclusive education services in shaping the character of regular students in interacting with students with special needs. The research uses a qualitative research paradigm with a case study approach. The data collection method was carried out through non-participatory observation, structured interviews, and documentation studies. Data analysis is carried out in the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, and supported by triangulation of sources and techniques to ensure the validity of the data. The results of the study show that (1) inclusive education services are implemented through the combination of students with special needs and regular students in one class, accompanied by material modification, learning differentiation, use of visual media, and group learning with peer assistance; (2) The implementation of these services has a positive impact on the development of students' character, especially empathy, tolerance, cooperation, social concern, and mutual respect; (3) The implementation of inclusion still faces obstacles in the form of limited special assistant teachers, minimal support facilities, and gaps in abilities between students. This study concludes that the implementation of inclusive education services can form a positive character of students. *This is an open access article under the CC BY SA license.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most basic human right for every individual. Globally, *the Education for All* (EFA) movement launched by UNESCO emphasizes that the education system is obliged to accommodate the

diversity of students. In Indonesia, this spirit is manifested through Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System which mandates that every citizen has the same right to quality education, including those with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and/or social disorders. Inclusive education is not just about placing children with special needs (ABK) in regular schools, but a systemic transformation that requires schools to adjust curriculum, teaching methods, and physical environments to be friendly to all children. This is an effort to break down the walls of discrimination and build a learning ecosystem based on the principles of justice and equality

Meanwhile, elementary school (SD) is the main foundation in the formation of students' character and basic abilities. The implementation of inclusion at the elementary level is crucial because it is during this time that social values such as empathy and tolerance begin to take shape permanently. However, in practice, the transition to inclusive schools often faces complex obstacles. Classic problems such as the lack of Special Supervisors (GPK), the lack of understanding of regular teachers about differentiation strategies, and infrastructure facilities that are not yet accessible are still a real portrait in many public schools.

SD Negeri 1 Cilangkap as one of the formal educational institutions has taken progressive steps by opening the door for students with special needs. This step should be appreciated, considering that public schools are often the basis for the lower middle class to get the right to education for their children with special needs. However, the challenges on the ground are not simple. Teachers are required to be able to "juggle" between the national curriculum targets and the individual needs of the crew that are very specific.

In addition to the academic aspect, a dimension that is often overlooked in inclusion research is its influence on character formation. At SD Negeri 1 Cilangkap, the presence of ABK in the midst of regular students creates a natural social laboratory. The daily interactions between them have the potential to foster an attitude of altruism, patience, and appreciation for differences. On the other hand, without good classroom management, this can trigger bullying or exclusion. Therefore, the researcher sees the need for an in-depth study to capture the reality of inclusion services at SD Negeri 1 Cilangkap. This research will not only look at how assignment modification or learning adaptation is carried out, but also how the social dynamics created in the classroom are able to shape students' character holistically.

Furthermore, inclusive education is not only oriented towards fulfilling the learning rights of children with special needs, but also has broad implications for the quality of the learning climate and the formation of social values in schools. Heterogeneous classroom environments demand pedagogical adjustments that encourage students to learn to live together in differences. This process indirectly shapes students' social awareness that each individual has uniqueness, limitations, and potentials that should be appreciated. Thus, inclusive classes serve as authentic social learning vehicles, where character values are not only taught conceptually, but are experienced in real life in everyday interactions.

In the context of character education, the presence of students with special needs in regular classes can be a trigger for the development of empathy and social concern for regular students. Students learn to understand the conditions of peers who have different needs, adjust the way they communicate, and develop a mutually helpful attitude. This process is in line with the goal of national education which emphasizes the development of the whole Indonesian human being, not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and socially mature. Inclusive education thus becomes a strategic medium in internalizing character values such as tolerance, cooperation, responsibility, and mutual respect.

However, the positive potential of inclusive education in shaping students' character will not be achieved optimally without the support of a planned and sustainable learning system. The role of teachers is very central, both as adaptive learning designers and as role models in being inclusive. Teachers are not only required to master the teaching material, but also have social sensitivity, patience, and the ability to manage heterogeneous classes. Teachers' unpreparedness in understanding the characteristics of ABK has the potential to cause service gaps, which can ultimately hinder the creation of healthy social interactions in the classroom.

In addition to teachers, institutional support from schools is also a determining factor in the success of inclusion practices. Inclusive school policies, the provision of supporting facilities, and the involvement of parents and the community are important components in creating an inclusive and sustainable education ecosystem. Without this support, inclusive education risks becoming just an administrative policy, without having a real impact on academic development or student character. Based on this description, it can be understood that inclusive education in elementary schools has complex and multidimensional dimensions. The implementation is not only related to learning strategies and educational services for ABK, but also touches on aspects of character formation and school culture as a whole. Therefore, empirical studies that capture inclusive education practices in a contextual manner, such as those conducted at SD Negeri 1 Cilangkap, Purwakarta Regency, are very relevant. This research is expected to be able to provide a real picture of how inclusive education services are applied in the field and the extent to which these practices contribute to the formation of students' character in daily school life.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education in Indonesia is an educational approach that provides opportunities for all students, including Children with Special Needs (ABK), to learn together in the same environment without discrimination. This concept is affirmed in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive Education, which states that every school is obliged to open access to education for students with special needs. According to Sunanto (2014), inclusive education is an effort to provide educational services that are tailored to the individual needs of each child but still in regular classes.

In Indonesia, inclusive education aims to remove learning barriers so that every child can participate optimally in learning activities. The Ministry of Education and Culture (2021) emphasizes that inclusion is not just the incorporation of ABK students in regular classes, but is a systematic effort to adjust the curriculum, learning methods, and school environment to be friendly to diversity. Thus, inclusive education not only facilitates ABK students, but also builds a school culture that respects differences and upholds the principle of equality.

Children with Special Needs (ABK)

Children with Special Needs are children who have developmental differences in certain aspects so that they require adjustments to educational services. Somantri (2018) explained that ABK includes children who experience intellectual barriers, learning difficulties, autism, behavioral barriers, communication barriers, and physical or sensory disorders. Each category of ABK requires a different learning strategy, which requires teachers to have a deep understanding of the characteristics and needs of each child.

In elementary schools, the existence of ABK in regular classes often requires teachers to adapt in learning activities. According to Efendi (2015), teachers must be able to design flexible teaching programs, provide individual support, and create a conducive learning environment for all students. With a good understanding of the characteristics of ABK, teachers can provide more effective and humane educational services.

Inclusive Learning in Primary Schools

Inclusive learning is an instructional process that ensures that all students, without exception, get learning opportunities that are appropriate to their abilities and needs. Idris (2016) explained that inclusive learning requires teachers to make adjustments in teaching methods, media use, and learning evaluation. This adjustment is important so that ABK students can participate in learning with regular students while maintaining the curriculum objectives. One of the key approaches to inclusive learning is differentiation of learning. Nurkolis (2020), differentiation provides flexibility for teachers to adjust teaching materials, learning activities, and learning outcomes according to students' ability levels.

Mulyasa (2019) emphasizes the importance of teachers' ability to create positive interactions and manage heterogeneous classrooms. Teachers not only play the role of delivering material, but also as facilitators who guide the learning process in a humane and inclusive manner. Inclusive learning practices also require collaboration between classroom teachers and special assistant teachers (GPK). Fitriani (2018) stated that GPK has an important role in providing information about the specific needs of ABK, assisting in assessment, and ensuring that the adaptation implemented by teachers is effective. This synergy allows for a more comprehensive and quality implementation of inclusive learning.

Character Education in an Inclusive Environment

Character education is an important aspect of the Indonesian education system. Character is formed through habituation, example, and social interaction in a learning environment. According to Zubaedi (2015), character education includes the development of moral values such as empathy, tolerance, discipline, responsibility, and cooperation. An inclusive environment naturally provides a rich social context to foster those values.

In inclusive learning, regular students interact directly with ABK friends. These interactions provide opportunities for students to develop empathy, tolerance, and care. Setiawati's research (2020) shows that students who are involved in learning activities with ABK have higher empathy and acceptance of diversity than students in non-inclusive schools. In addition, cooperative learning in an inclusive environment encourages students to work together, help each other, and develop an attitude of respect for differences. Therefore, inclusive education not only improves students' academic competence, but also plays an important role in the process of character building, especially in a social-emotional context.

2. METHODS

This research uses a case study approach oriented to understanding phenomena, events, and behaviors in depth. Suharyanto H. Soro (2023) defines a case study as a scientific activity carried out consciously, both single and plural problems using observation, interview, questionire, and documentation data collection methods or the like so that they can describe and exploit the findings comprehensively and in-depth. In other words, this approach was chosen because inclusive education is a complex process and involves social interactions, behaviors, and classroom dynamics that cannot be explained by numbers alone.

The researcher used data collection methods through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The observation method is carried out by photographing phenomena, events, and behaviors that occur naturally. In the context of this study, the data was recorded and recorded in its entirety from the beginning to the end. It should be noted that researchers do not participate in learning activities both in the classroom and outside the classroom. The next method is structured interviews, where researchers determine the time and place to conduct interviews with respondents. The interview took approximately 10 minutes for one respondent. The final method is a documentation study, which is to analyze and select documents related to the purpose of the research. The sample or respondents in this study are school principals, class teachers, and students. The selection of samples or respondents was carried out by purposive sampling. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Cilangkap, Purwakarta Regency, which has implemented an inclusive education model at several grade levels. This school environment represents the condition of public elementary schools in general that are beginning to adjust inclusion practices with limited facilities

The analysis uses the model of Miles & Huberman (1994): data reduction is the selection of relevant data, grouping according to themes such as "learning modification", "student interaction", and "character development". Data presentation is to compile data in the form of narratives, tables of findings, and descriptions of interaction patterns so that they are easy to understand. Drawing conclusions, namely interpreting data to conclude how inclusive education is applied and how it affects

character formation. Triangulation was carried out through comparison between interview results, observations, and documentation to ensure the validity of the data.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of inclusive services at SD Negeri 1 Cilangkap runs in the form of combining students with special needs (ABK) with regular students in one class. Teachers apply flexibility in delivering materials, time management, and seating arrangements so that ABK students get optimal comfort. The use of simple language, step-by-step instructions, and positive reinforcement are an important part of this service. In addition, teachers routinely coordinate with parents to monitor children's development.

Learning Adjustment Strategies
Some of the strategies found include:
a. Material Modification
   The material is enriched with images, simplified sentences, and provided alternative activities for crew members who have difficulty participating in standard activities.
b. Learning Differentiation
   Differentiation is carried out in content (material), process (learning method), and product (final result). For example, crew members can complete fewer tasks but still be meaningful.
c. Individual Mentoring
   Occasionally, teachers give a personal approach, especially when students have difficulty focusing or understanding instructions.
d. Visual and Audio Media
   The use of word cards, short videos, and visual schedules really helps ABK understand the flow of activities.
e. Group Learning
   Mixed groups (regular-ABK) have been proven to increase positive interactions and generate empathy for regular students

The above data confirms that the practice of inclusion has a significant contribution to the development of students' character, in line with humanistic and constructivistic educational theories. Learning that makes room for diversity allows students to learn about empathy and tolerance naturally through social interaction. Modification of learning is an important component of the success of inclusive education. Classroom teachers play a major role in creating an adaptive and child-friendly learning environment. The involvement of peers as companions has also been proven to be effective in improving the comfort and social development of ABK students. However, limited facilities and the lack of accompanying teachers are still a typical challenge for public schools. Institutional support is indispensable to ensure the optimal continuity of inclusive services.

Regular Student Response

The results showed that the response of regular students was getting better as they got used to it. At first some students feel confused or hesitant to interact, but through the teacher's direction and shared experiences, students become more tolerant. They help each other, understand that each friend has different abilities, and learn to control their attitudes. Furthermore, the findings of this study show that inclusive education not only impacts the social-emotional aspects of regular students, but also contributes to the formation of a more humanist and democratic classroom culture. The interaction that is built between regular students and students with special needs encourages an authentic social learning process, where students learn to understand differences directly, rather than through theoretical explanations alone. This reinforces the constructivist view that emphasizes that knowledge and value are built through experience and social interaction.

Student Character Development
    Characters that have developed significantly include:
a. Empathy: students begin to understand the feelings of friends and provide help without being asked.
b. Tolerance: students accept diversity and do not mock the limitations of the ABK.
c. Cooperation: working in groups encourages them to set roles according to their abilities.
d. Social concern: an initiative to help friends voluntarily appears.
e. Mutual respect: students learn to use good language and wait for their turn.

    From the perspective of character education, the results of this study confirm that values such as empathy, tolerance, cooperation, and social care develop through habituation and consistent role models in inclusive learning. Teachers play the role of the main agent in forming a positive interaction pattern, both through fair classroom management and through an attitude that respects each student. When teachers show acceptance of diversity, students tend to imitate this attitude in daily interactions, so that the process of internalizing character values takes place naturally

 The Impact of Inclusive Learning Outside the Classroom
    The positive influence is seen not only in the classroom but also in the school environment. Regular students show readiness to help crew members when in the canteen, in the field, and during break hours. They take friends to UKS, invite them to play simple games, and pay more attention if anyone has difficulties.

Barriers to Inclusion Implementation
    Some of the obstacles found include:
a. The limited number of special assistant teachers means that classroom teachers bear a double burden.
b. The gap in academic ability makes teachers have to prepare for many variations of tasks.
c. Adaptive facilities such as learning aids are still very minimal.
d. Some parents do not understand the concept of inclusion and consider ABK to "interfere with learning".

Support from the School
a. The school provides several forms of support such as:a. Basic training for teachers on inclusive education.
b. Consultation with the referral SLB to understand the specific needs of the crew members.
c. Provision of simple visual media to support learning.
d. Build active communication with parents as the main partner of education
e. children.
    This support is an important foundation for the sustainability of inclusive practices even though they are not ideal in terms of facilities. These findings also reinforce the results of previous research that stated that the success of inclusive education is largely determined by the pedagogical readiness of teachers and a conducive classroom climate. The differentiation of learning and the use of visual media found in this study is a concrete form of teachers' efforts to bridge differences in students' abilities. The strategy not only helps students with special needs understand the material, but also encourages regular students to learn to be patient, appreciate the process, and work together in heterogeneous groups.
    However, this study also reveals that limited resources have the potential to hinder the optimization of the impact of inclusive education on student character formation. The lack of special assistant teachers causes classroom teachers to have to carry out dual roles, which in the long run can affect the quality of learning services. In addition, the limitations of adaptive means require teachers' creativity to utilize simple media so that learning remains inclusive and meaningful.

School institutional support is an important factor in maintaining the sustainability of inclusive practices. Teacher training, supportive school policies, and effective communication with parents have been proven to strengthen the implementation of inclusive education. Parental involvement, particularly in understanding the concept of inclusion and supporting positive interactions of children outside of school, contributes to the consistency of student character formation in various life contexts.

Overall, this discussion shows that inclusive education has strategic potential as a means of character formation of elementary school students. The impact is not automatic, but depends on the quality of implementation, teacher competence, and support from the school system. Therefore, inclusive education needs to be understood not only as an education access policy, but also as a pedagogical approach oriented towards the development of the whole human being, covering cognitive, social, and moral aspects.

4. CONCLUSION

Inclusive services at SD Negeri 1 Cilangkap have been implemented through the merger of ABK with regular students, learning modifications, and differentiation approaches. Teachers' strategies include material modification, individual mentoring, cooperative learning, and the use of visual media. Regular students show a positive and tolerant response to the existence of ABK. The character of empathy, tolerance, and cooperation develops through the habit of inclusive interactions. The main obstacles are the limitations of GPK, learning facilities, and parental understanding. The school supports through training, consultation, and the provision of simple media.

The implementation of inclusive education services at SD Negeri 1 Cilangkap forms a positive character for students. This can be seen from the way regular students interact with peers who have special needs and has been proven to encourage the development of empathy, tolerance, cooperation, social concern, and mutual respect. The implementation of inclusive education still faces various obstacles, especially the limitation of special assistant teachers, the lack of supporting facilities, and differences in abilities between students. Therefore, adequate human resource support, teacher competency improvement, and the provision of appropriate facilities are needed so that inclusive education services can run more optimally and sustainably in supporting the formation of students' character.

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