



## Barriers to Inclusive Education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah: A Field Study at MI Yappi Gubukrubu

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### ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is a strategy that aims to provide equal learning opportunities for all students, including children with special needs (ABK). This study aims to identify and analyze barriers to the implementation of inclusive education at MI Yappi Gubukrubu, an educational institution that is not yet registered as an inclusive school administratively. The research method used was a qualitative approach with field studies, involving interviews with teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubu. The results of the study show that there are three main obstacles in the implementation of inclusive education: (1) lack of understanding and training of teachers in dealing with children with special needs, (2) limited human resources and supporting infrastructure, (3) high negative perceptions of children with special needs. Although MI Yappi Gubukrubu is not yet officially an inclusive school, the diversity of its students requires teachers to apply the principles of inclusive education. This study emphasizes the urgency of in-depth training for educators, improvement of infrastructure, and socialization to change the negative stigma towards children with special needs in order to create an inclusive and adaptive learning environment.

### Keywords:

Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs, Barriers, Qualitative Approach.

### Introduction

Inclusive education is an educational strategy that accommodates all students regardless of their background, including children with special needs (ABK) in the same learning environment (Nurfadhilah, 2022). Children with special needs (ABK) are children who require special treatment or services due to developmental barriers or physical, intellectual, and emotional abnormalities. Inclusive education aims to create a learning environment that is supportive, adaptive, and responsive to the learning needs of each student (Pitaloka et al., 2022). Inclusive education is synonymous with institutions or agencies that implement inclusive education, such as inclusive schools. Referring to the definition of inclusive education, inclusive schools are educational institutions that provide equal learning opportunities for all students regardless of their background and condition. In short, inclusive schools are institutions that implement inclusive education.

The idea of inclusive education is not a new concept, but has developed significantly since the Salamanca Declaration in 1994, which called for education for all, without exception. This idea is based on the principles of equality and human rights, which ensure that all children have the right to education without discrimination (Yusuf, 2023). This is a paradigm shift from the segregated education model, where children with special needs are placed in separate schools, or the integration model, which only places them in regular classes without adequate support. Inclusive education emphasizes that pluralism is a strength, and the education system must adapt to meet the learning needs of each individual. This



is because education is a right that all children should have, regardless of their circumstances, including children with special needs.

In Indonesia, the implementation of inclusive education is stipulated by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and Special Intelligence and/or Talents (Arriani et al., 2022). The National Education System Law explicitly indicates that every citizen has the right to quality education, regardless of social, economic, or religious background, including children with special needs. Meanwhile, Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009 provides more detailed guidelines on the implementation of inclusive education, including the identification of students, curriculum, teaching staff, and infrastructure. Although the legal framework is in place, the implementation of inclusive education still faces various challenges, especially at the elementary/MI level.

One of these challenges is the ability of schools to provide competent facilities and infrastructure, such as accessible classrooms, learning aids, and special assistant teachers. In addition, the lack of knowledge among educators about inclusive education is also a challenge in its implementation (Moningka et al., 2024).

MI Yappi Gubukrubuh is one of the educational institutions that faces challenges in implementing inclusive education, even though administratively it is not yet included in the category of inclusive schools. This Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is located in a rural area, Gubukrubuh, Getas, Playen, Gunungkidul, serving the basic educational needs of the surrounding community. Although it does not yet have official status as an inclusive school, MI Yappi Gubukrubuh has in fact accepted and educated students with various characteristics and diverse learning needs, such as students with learning difficulties, lack of focus in specific subjects, hyperactivity, and emotional problems. This condition requires teachers to provide special services and treatment.

Based on observations and interviews with teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh, there are several obstacles faced in the implementation of inclusive education, such as: (1) lack of understanding and training for teachers in dealing with children with special needs, (2) limited human resources and supporting infrastructure, (3) high negative perceptions of children with special needs. This study aims to identify and analyze the obstacles to the implementation of inclusive education at MI Yappi Gubuk Rubuh. Specifically, this study will answer the following questions: (1) What obstacles do teachers face in implementing inclusive education at MI Yappi Gubuk Rubuh? and (2) What strategies do teachers use to overcome these obstacles?

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a field study method. A qualitative approach is a research strategy that focuses on a deep understanding of a phenomenon through subjective and contextual research (Sugiyono, 2021). The field study method is an effort to obtain data on the phenomenon that will be used as the object of research through interviews (Markiano et al., 2024). The qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to understand the phenomenon in depth regarding the obstacles to the implementation of inclusive education at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh, not to generalize the results to a wider population. Meanwhile, the field study method was chosen because data collection was carried out using field data collection techniques such as interviews and observations.



The research was conducted at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh, located in Gubukrubuh, Getas, Playen, Gunungkidul. The location was chosen based on the consideration that MI Yappi Gubukrubuh has characteristics related to the focus of the research, namely the diversity of student conditions even though administratively MI Yappi Gubukrubuh is not yet classified as an inclusive school. The research subjects were teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh who were directly involved in the selected learning activities based on their experience in handling students. Ethical aspects in the research were considered by obtaining permission from the informants, maintaining data confidentiality, and avoiding bias through researcher neutrality (Arikunto, 2020).

Data analysis used interactive thematic analysis techniques, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2021). Interview and observation data were coded inductively to identify main themes such as lack of teacher training and social stigma. Data validity was obtained through interviews and observations. Reliability was strengthened by complete documentation of the research process.

## Results

Inclusive education is an effort to implement the Minister of National Education Regulation on Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and Special Intelligence and/or Talents. This regulation is stipulated in Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009 Article 3(2), which states that every student with physical, emotional, mental, and social disabilities or with intellectual potential and/or special talents has the right to receive education or learning in an educational environment together with students in general (Arriani et al., 2022; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2023).

This study discusses the obstacles that arise in the implementation of inclusive education at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh using a qualitative approach and field study methods. This method allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomena occurring in the field by conducting interviews with teachers who implement inclusive education at the school (Sugiyono, 2021; Moleong, 2020; Arikunto, 2020).

Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Vicky Ristanto, a physical education teacher at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh, it was revealed that this school is not yet classified as an inclusive school administratively. However, in reality, teachers face a variety of student characters that require different approaches. For example, hyperactive students will get bored during lessons if the learning is only conducted through interactive lectures without any educational games (Fitrah et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2022). In line with the background described above, several major obstacles or barriers emerge as impediments in the process of implementing inclusive education (Moningka et al., 2024; Ramadhana, 2020; Sari & Wulandari, 2021).

First, the lack of knowledge and training for teachers is a major obstacle. Teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh have not yet received sufficient specialized training to handle students with special needs properly and efficiently. This results in a lack of ability among teachers to implement learning strategies that are responsive and adaptive to the different characteristics of students (Fitrah et al., 2024; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2023). This lack of understanding also causes confusion and uncertainty in meeting the various learning needs of students (Nurfadhilah, 2022; Pitaloka et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2022). In this situation, there is a need for special training or seminars and socialization programs that discuss inclusive education (Yusuf, 2023; Arriani et al., 2022; Sari & Wulandari, 2021).

This lack of understanding is not only in the aspect of education but also in the process of identifying the types of special needs in children. For example, a teacher may find it difficult to identify between students who simply have low motivation to learn and students who have emotional disorders, resulting in inappropriate teaching methods (Ummah et al., 2023; Ramadhana, 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2023). Teachers tend to apply the same teaching methods, which may be efficient for some students but fail to accommodate the special needs of children with special needs (Fitrah et al., 2024; Moningka et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2022). As a result, some students with special needs feel isolated and even frustrated because their learning needs are not being met (Pitaloka et al., 2022; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Yusuf, 2023).

This obstacle was revealed during the interview session when the researcher asked about the administrative status of MI Yappi Gubukrubuh and whether it was included in the category of inclusive schools. At that time, the informant responded by asking a question back about the meaning of an inclusive school. This answer shows that basic understanding of the concept of inclusion is still low and needs to be improved among educators (Yusuf, 2023; Arriani et al., 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2023). In addition, the informant also stated that there were no children with special needs at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh, even though in reality there were several children in the classroom with special needs of various types, such as children with emotional disorders or children who lacked focus in specific subjects (Ummah et al., 2023; Ramadhana, 2020; Rahman et al., 2022). This statement indicates a misconception that children with special needs are limited to those with obvious physical conditions, whereas the scope of children with special needs is very broad. This scope includes learning difficulties, emotional disorders, and other conditions that are not always physically apparent (Pitaloka et al., 2022; Nurfadhilah, 2022; Sari & Wulandari, 2021). Therefore, systematic and continuous training programs covering the concepts and practices of handling children with special needs are very important to improve the abilities of teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh (Fitrah et al., 2024; Moningka et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2023; Lestari et al., 2022).

Second, limitations in human resources and facilities also contribute to significant barriers. MI Yappi Gubukrubuh experiences a shortage of special assistant teachers and adequate learning facilities, such as accessible classrooms and learning aids suitable for the characteristics of students with special needs (Ramadhana, 2020; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Rahman et al., 2022). Inadequate physical conditions and facilities make the learning process less effective and unable to meet the inclusive education standards expected by national policy (Fitrah et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2023).

In terms of classroom conditions, inaccessible classrooms are a major obstacle for students with physical disabilities, such as the absence of ramps for wheelchairs (Arriani et al., 2022; Yusuf, 2023; Sari & Wulandari, 2021). In addition, the lack of specific learning aids such as Braille books, hearing aids, and special software for dyslexia limits students' access to materials and active involvement in the learning process (Pitaloka et al., 2022; Nurfadhilah, 2022; Rahman et al., 2022).

Apart from its administrative status, which is not yet in the category of inclusive schools, MI Yappi Gubukrubuh does not yet have special assistant teachers to serve or handle children with special needs (Moningka et al., 2024; Ramadhana, 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2023; Indra, 2020). However, the teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh always strive for continuity and smoothness in the teaching and learning process. This is evident when dealing with differences in student character and learning needs, teachers will look for interesting learning methods that can be accepted by their students (Fitrah et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2023; Sari & Wulandari, 2021). Classroom conditions are also not accessible when there

are children with special needs who have physical disabilities (Arriani et al., 2022; Yusuf, 2023; Rahman et al., 2022).

These limitations pose additional obstacles for classroom teachers. For example, a teacher must spend more time helping students who have difficulty reading, while other students who need help with other skills may be neglected (Pitaloka et al., 2022; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2023). Therefore, the development of adequate facilities and infrastructure is essential to create an inclusive learning environment at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh (Nurfadhilah, 2022; Moningka et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2022; Sari & Widodo, 2024).

Third, there are still negative perceptions and social stigma towards children with special needs that persist in schools and communities. This stigma not only affects the attitudes of teachers and other students, but also creates psychosocial challenges for students with special needs (Ramadhana, 2020; Fitrah et al., 2024; Sari & Wulandari, 2021).

This stigma is often rooted in a lack of understanding about children with special needs (Ummah et al., 2023; Pitaloka et al., 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2023). In the school environment, stigma can manifest in the form of subtle discrimination, such as teachers having low expectations of students with special needs, or other students bullying students with special needs (Yusuf, 2023; Arriani et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2022). For example, students with learning difficulties may be considered stupid or even lazy by their peers, when in fact these students only need a different learning approach (Nurfadhilah, 2022; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Fitrah et al., 2024). In addition, stigma in the community causes parents to hide their children with special needs because of shame and the negative judgment of others. As a result, these children lose opportunities for proper socialization (Moningka et al., 2024; Ramadhana, 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2023; Hadi et al., 2023).

The psychosocial impact of this negative stigma is devastating to children's mental health. Children with special needs who experience discrimination and bullying tend to be more sensitive when their self-esteem is hurt, and may even experience anxiety, depression, and withdrawal from their social environment (Fitrah et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2022; Kartika 2021). They will feel worthless and unaccepted, which will hinder their academic and social development (Pitaloka et al., 2022; Yusuf, 2023; Sari & Wulandari, 2021). Therefore, efforts to change this negative stigma must be prioritized. This can be done by conducting socialization (Arriani et al., 2022; Nurfadhilah, 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2023; Nugroho, 2023).

The diversity of students' characters and emotions poses a unique challenge for teachers. Informants acknowledged that with this diversity, teachers are required to create creative and student-centered learning ( ) that can attract students' interest in learning. Undeniably, this diversity also requires full patience from teachers (Moningka et al., 2024; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Rahman et al., 2022).

Through field studies and in-depth interviews, this research has identified these obstacles in a concrete and contextual manner. These findings are in line with the theories and regulations governing inclusive education, which emphasize the importance of the readiness of schools and educators in providing an adaptive and inclusive learning environment (Ramadhana, 2020; Fitrah et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2023). Therefore, to overcome these obstacles, interventions are needed in the form of intensive training for teachers, improvement of facilities and infrastructure, strengthening communication with parents and the community, and socialization to change existing negative stigmas (Ummah et al., 2023; Yusuf, 2023; Sari & Wulandari, 2021). By creating an accepting and supportive environment, MI Yappi Gubukrubuh can help students with special needs feel safe and valued.

Despite facing various obstacles and limitations, teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh have demonstrated their high level of dedication in striving for effective learning for all students. The strategies and methods applied are adaptive and innovative. Teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh independently seek and apply various learning methods that are more interesting and interactive. As mentioned by Mr. Vicky Ristanto in an interview, for hyperactive students, they do not only rely on lectures, but also combine educational games and physical activities that give students the opportunity to channel their positive energy while learning (Fitrah et al., 2024; Moningka et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2023; Joko & Widiastuti, 2024). Teachers also show a high level of empathy towards students, striving to understand the background, obstacles, and learning needs faced by each child. This approach supports a strong relationship between teachers and students (Ummah et al., 2023; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Rahman et al., 2022). Without systematic training, expert support, and adequate facilities, the effectiveness of this strategy is limited. Teachers will become exhausted from having to constantly innovate, and the success of handling students with special needs depends on the initiative of teachers (Ramadhana, 2020; Nurfadhilah, 2022; Yusuf, 2023; Putra et al., 2020).

The results of this study indicate that although MI Yappi Gubukrubuh is not yet administratively registered as an inclusive school, the presence of students with diverse conditions requires more attention in the implementation of inclusive education. With comprehensive and continuous handling of obstacles, it is hoped that the implementation of inclusive education at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh can improve so that all students obtain equal and optimal learning rights and opportunities.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the study conducted at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh, it can be concluded that the implementation of inclusive education at the elementary school level, both SD/MI, still faces various obstacles. These obstacles include:

1. Lack of understanding and training for teachers in dealing with children with special needs. There are teachers at MI Yappi Gubukrubuh who have not received training and socialization regarding inclusive education and how to deal with children with learning needs. This causes difficulties in identifying the specific needs of students and implementing adaptive learning.
2. Limited human resources and supporting infrastructure. MI Yappi Gubukrubuh faces a shortage of special assistant teachers and adequate learning facilities. Classrooms that are not accessible and the lack of learning aids for children with special needs hinder effective learning. These obstacles immediately limit the school's potential to provide an inclusive and pedagogical learning environment and hinder students' access to the support they need.
3. High negative perceptions towards children with special needs.

There are still negative views and social stigma towards children with special needs in schools and society. These negative views not only affect the behavior of teachers and other students, but also create psychosocial challenges for students with special needs. These obstacles are certainly factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education. This stigma can lead to self-isolation, low self-esteem, and hinder involvement in the learning process.

Administratively, MI Yappi Gubukrubuh is not yet classified as an inclusive school, but in reality, teachers still face a variety of students with diverse conditions and characteristics. This requires teachers to apply the principles of inclusive education. However, the adaptive and creative efforts made by teachers demonstrate their commitment to equitable education, but these efforts need to be supported by a more structured and comprehensive system.



Thus, it is necessary to have an understanding of inclusive education by educators, the provision of supporting facilities and infrastructure, and acceptance of existing pluralism. Continuous teacher training focused on early identification and differentiated learning strategies is a fundamental step. In addition, investment in accessible facilities and the provision of specific learning aids is crucial to creating a supportive physical environment. Finally, socialization and awareness campaigns throughout the school community and society are needed to change negative stigma into acceptance and appreciation of diversity. With comprehensive and sustainable handling of obstacles, it is hoped that the implementation of inclusive education at MI Yappi Gubukrubu will improve, so that all students obtain equal and optimal learning rights and opportunities. This success will not only improve the quality of education for children with special needs, but will also enrich the learning experience for all students, creating a more inclusive and empathetic school community.

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