



35th ANNIVERSARY OF SEBELAS MARET UNIVERSITY
Accelerating Sebelas Maret University
towards World Class University



Gunarhadi

18

PROCEEDING

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

Building Nation Character through Inclusive Education
in Global Perspective
Solo, March 19th 2011



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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is a global issue in many countries including Malaysia that has formulated policies to achieve its aims and objectives. Its implementation to create inclusive school communities, however, is confronted with barriers, dilemmas and contradictions that resulted in reforms. The purpose of this paper is to highlight Malaysian policy toward inclusive education and to identify the major problems, issues and challenges in inclusive schools; and constrains inclusive practices based on the two inclusive schools in Malaysia.

Keywords: inclusive education, malaysian policy, issues and challenges

A. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is defined as a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers within the learning environment. UNESCO (1994) noted that inclusive school is about enabling schools to serve all children. This means that an inclusive school is a school which welcomes all learners regardless of their characteristics, disadvantages or difficulties. It also means setting schools in the wider context of education systems, where

there is both formal and non-formal education. It draws on all resources of their communities to ensure that the needs of diverse learners can be met effectively.

Inclusive education is based on the right of all learners to a quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches lives. Focusing particularly on vulnerable and marginalized groups, it seeks to develop the full potential of every individual.

The ultimate goal of inclusive quality education is to end all forms of discrimination and foster social cohesion. The commitment to the eradication of the illiteracy as sponsored by UNESCO is not only a reflection of world wide human right movement but also an international demand of education for all. In April 2000, the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, set a goal ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free primary education of good quality (Shaeffer, 2005). It implies that every country holds the responsibility to provide wide educational access for all children aged below 18.

In general, the teaching principles in inclusive classroom are similar to the ones in regular classes. Mayor (1994) states that inclusive classroom should guarantee that all students get the quality of sustainable education through the adjusted curriculum, organization, teaching strategy, resource utility and community involvement regardless of their

differences and difficulties. The differences and difficulties may lie in the diversity in the respects of their physical, intellectual, social and emotional barriers that affect the learning (Ainscow, 2000). Such barriers may eventually appear on the low cognitive function, motivation, and students' self-esteem.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research methodology was considered the most appropriate for investigating issues and challenges in inclusive education. Like most qualitative research, the research questions were used as a guide for the researcher to develop and entice the flow of more relevant enquiries into the research.

The semi-structured interviews with two teachers and document analysis were guided by the research question and was primarily to 'pull out' information and also to enable joint construction of meaning about the topic of study between the researcher and the subject. The interview data was tape-recorded and the responses were later transcribed to enable the researcher to

determine problem and challenges in inclusive education.

Data was collected through the various techniques employed in this study and was verified by means of triangulation. The emerging data was used to validate the interpretation of the research findings guided by the research questions. Data was also revealed through document analysis.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Practices in Malaysia

To give an education to children in Malaysia is under the responsibility to two ministries. That is Ministry of Education and Ministry of Woman Development, Family and Community. Ministry of Woman Development, Family and Community take responsibility to the children who have problems such as:

1. Severe physical handicap
2. Severe mental retardation
3. Multihandicaps
4. Handicapping conditions that make it impossible to attend the regular school provided under the Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education gives an education to children with special needs due to visual problem, hearing and learning disabilities and students who need special remedy. Categorical children under the learning disabilities under responsibilities Ministry of Education are:

1. Down syndrome
2. Autism
3. Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder
4. Mildly mental retardation, and
5. Learning disabilities (Example: Dyslexia)

Education Policy

All the program of education for children with special needs is going under these policies:

1. Education Act (1996, Chapter 8)
2. Education Act (Pindaan) 2002
3. Peraturan-Peraturan Pendidikan (Pendidikan Khas) 1997
4. International Declaration
5. United Nations' World Programmed of Action Concerning Disable Persons (1983)
6. The World Declaration on Education for All (1990)

7. The United Nations' Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Person with Disabilities (1993)
8. The Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (Salamanca Statement) 1994
9. Biwako Millennium Framework for Action Towards an Inclusive Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (2002).
- and 1282 Integrated Program (special classes in a mainstream school) for visual and hearing impairment, and learning disabilities. The total enrolment for this program is 29169 in number. Most of these schools provide residential facilities. 29169 disabled students getting allowance and 7.8 million Ringgit Malaysia has been allocated in 2006. Special Education Program is managed under Special Education Department and Special Integrated Education. While Special Recovery Program is managed fully under State Education Department.

Malaysian Policy

1. To improve the rights to education and Inclusive Education of Malaysian Citizen

Compulsory education was implemented in 2003. It aimed at ensuring every child has the right to be educated in the formal institution at primary level. Free education is fully funded by the federal government in 2008. Student in Malaysia does not have to pay any kind of tuition fees.

2. To increase right to education for at risk children:

Students with special educational need are provided with special education through 32 Special Schools

Inclusive Education Practice in Malaysia

Students with Hearing Impairments.

The majority of students with hearing impairment are segregated from mainstream learning at the primary level of education. These students receive their primary education either in special education schools or in SEC in mainstream schools (Integrated Special Education Program).

For lower secondary education; students with- hearing impairments

from special education primary schools are integrated into SEC in mainstream schools with the exception of the Federated Special Education Secondary School for the deaf, in Penang. This particular school accepts students with hearing impairment at the lower secondary level.

Students with hearing impairments could proceed to upper secondary education in either special education secondary school (as mentioned above) or integrated program in mainstream schools for academic option. Students opting for academic subjects in SEC of mainstream schools are usually taught separately from their mainstream counterparts.

These students who are vocationally inclined could continue their upper secondary education in this particular field either at a special education secondary vocational school or integrated programmed (SEC) in secondary technical/vocational schools. Students in secondary technical/vocational schools are taught separately from mainstream students for three subjects only (Malay Language, Religious/Moral Studies and

Mathematics). They are fully included in mainstream classes for vocational and technical subjects. On average about 90% of the student's education in these schools takes place in mainstream classes with their mainstream peers.

At the tertiary level of education, three polytechnics provide higher education for students with hearing impairments. The initiation of special education program in polytechnics was guided by the 'least restrictive principle', thus the establishment of integration programmed in polytechnics.

Students with Visual Impairments

Students with visual impairments in integrated programmed in mainstream primary school are usually segregated from mainstream learning during their first three years of primary education (phase 1 of primary education). Various degrees of inclusion are being practiced for these students for the next 3 to 5 years of primary education (children with SEN are given the option of 2 extra years in primary education). Some students are included for all subjects with the exception of physical education and

arts subject, while others are included for certain subjects only. The degree of inclusion for each of these individual depends on the student's ability to cope with mainstream learning.

The majority of visual impaired students in integrated program are included in mainstream learning for all subjects except those mentioned at the primary schooling. Intellectually these students are perceived able to cope with mainstream learning and their ability to follow verbal instruction makes inclusion practicable. Segregation is the essence of teaching and learning for these students in special education schools be it primary and secondary.

Students with Learning Disabilities

Unlike children with hearing and visual impairment, no special education schools were established for children with learning disabilities (mental retardation) at either primary or secondary level of schooling. All students with learning are educated within integrated programmed.

For primary and secondary education, the majority of students with learning disabilities are segregated

from mainstream classroom learning. But there are quite substantial numbers of these students who are included into mainstream classes. There are no set rules governing the inclusion of these students rest entirely on the school's special education teachers, nonetheless, there are two generally accepted criteria for the inclusion of children with learning disabilities, in which, they are able to managed themselves without help, and do not have behavioral-conditions that could cause disruption to mainstream learning. Children who are perceived to be able to access mainstream learning are included either fully or for certain subjects only. Thus, inclusion of these students is strongly encouraged but not mandatory in Malaysia.

Strategy

Ministry of Education allocated nearly RM1.0 billion every year to support the program to prepare students ready for education. Among the aims of the program are to increase student's health, safety, discipline, and well-being are:

1. Food Nutrition Program – This scheme allowed nearly 707,000

children to enjoy a daily breakfast before school in 2006, a School Milk Program that provided milk at school to nearly 570,000 students in 2006

2. School Health Program
3. Guidance & Counseling
4. Boarding facilities
5. Textbook Loan Scheme – beginning the 2008 school session, the Text Book Loan Scheme will be provided to all students, irrespective of their families' income and with no restrictions on the number of eligible children. Five million students will benefit from this scheme. It Means that, schooling in Malaysia is now completely free
6. Scholarship and Loan – supported 230,000 students at secondary level
7. Special allowance for every students – RM 150.00 per month for primary and secondary and RM 300.00 per month in university
8. Teachers get special allowance – RM 250.00 as incentive to 5600 special teachers education (2008)
9. Student management support (Student Management support)

Problems

1. Teaching and Learning

Respondent 1 said that, the teacher who teaches the inclusive student said that, they need further training to teach the student. Actually they have enough training already. Respondent no 2 raise the problem for student to use brailed code skills in primary school. This is because there are differences between using brailed code in bahasa Melayu and in English. When the student enters secondary school, they have a problem to read. However, respondent no 2 said, the school record is very good. No student leaves out from the school without reading ability.

2. Facilities

Respondent said there is no problem. Only to bring the source to the class because the student doesn't know what the teacher should teach. The sources also are very lot. Example Al-Quran brailed will become 15 books

3. Administration Support

The administrative staff gives full support to the teachers. They are very collaborative

4. Socialization

The students have characteristic with the normal ones. Some are very motivated but some are lazy. However, this program is very important for the students to join and socialize with normal students. However, society still gives a wrong perception toward blind student. This finding support the finding of the studies by Wang, Anderson and Bram (1992) which have reported 50 empirical researches comparing the graduate students with special needs from special schools and special schools with full mainstreaming. In social perspective, student with special needs in regular school perform better in interaction among students and between students and teachers.

5. Training

Respondent 1 said he has enough courses. On one year 3 to 4 times the school will sent him to training and the course. Respondent no. 2 said that, they need special expertise. They need to

find themselves. Example her expertise is in using Al-Quran Brailled and respondent no 2 is expert in using jaws software (laptop using voice)

D. CONCLUSIONS

Inclusive education is a global issue, and countries including Malaysia have formulated policies to achieve its aims and objectives. Its interpretation and implementation to create inclusive school communities however are met with barriers, dilemmas and contradictions that resulted in reforms that are superficial and ad hoc. Efforts to achieve a more inclusive school environment must adopt a wider approach within the mainstream education system. The understanding of the purpose and functions of schools as a social institution and the extent of its effective contribution toward quality and equality education for all children, including special needs children, remain a continuing challenge.

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