

Mainstreaming Disabilities in the Education Sector: Implementation of Inclusive Elementary School Policy in Malang City

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Abstract

Inclusive education ensures equal access to education for persons with disabilities. This study examines the implementation of inclusive basic education policies in Malang City and the challenges in mainstreaming disability rights. Despite the government's commitment through Law No. 8/2016 and PP No. 13/2020, disparities persist. Of 285 primary schools, only 95 offer inclusive education, with many lacking disability-friendly facilities. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and secondary data analysis, findings reveal key challenges: limited trained teachers, inadequate support staff, and insufficient infrastructure. The study highlights the need for enhanced teacher training, expanded inclusive schools, and improved facilities to ensure equitable education access.

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1. Introduction

Disability mainstreaming is a strategic approach to ensure that the needs, rights, and participation of persons with disabilities are integrated into every aspect of policies, programs, and activities, at the level of government, educational institutions, and community organizations. This principle aims to prevent discrimination and remove barriers that hinder the full participation of persons with disabilities in various sectors of life, such as health services, employment, education, and public accessibility (Iswanto, 2021). This is following taglines such as "no one left behind" in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and "nothing about us without us" reflecting the principle of social inclusion, which emphasizes the importance of involving all levels of society, including vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, in accessing public services (Hartanto, 2024). In the context of social inclusion, meaningful participation from the community is essential to ensure that no individual or group is marginalized, especially in terms of access to education.

The government has made strong commitments and efforts to improve gender equality, support people with disabilities, and implement inclusive policies in all sectors, including education. In the education sector, efforts to integrate a gender perspective have progressed quite well, while efforts to mainstream disability issues still seem to experience many obstacles (Yusadiredja, 2021). Various obstacles are passed both in physical infrastructure, lack of human resources for educators, and learning materials that are not fully disability-friendly.

On the other hand, most people with disabilities live in rural areas with low levels of education. Public schools in villages generally do not accept students with disabilities, while

special schools (SLB) are mostly located in the district city center. Only a few people with disabilities can access basic education, both in public schools and SLBs (Salim & Yulianto, 2021). With this problem, the government has implemented an inclusive education policy at all levels of education. Based on Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities and Government Regulation No. 13 of 2020, it is stipulated that the government is obliged to provide reasonable accommodation for learners with disabilities to ensure equal access to education. This includes providing disability-friendly facilities, an inclusive curriculum, competent educators, and a learning environment that supports the active participation of learners with disabilities.

This provision is in line with the National Action Plan for Human Rights (RANHAM), which emphasizes the importance of efforts to fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities, including in the field of education. RANHAM serves as a strategic guideline to encourage local governments and educational institutions to fulfill their obligations towards educational inclusion so that the rights of persons with disabilities to quality education can be effectively realized.

Table 1.
Actions in RANHAM related to efforts to fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities

Topic	Action
Education	1. Improved teacher competence in inclusive education learning for children with special needs (through technical guidance)
	2. Increase in the number of schools offering inclusive education
	3. Provision of learning support for students with special needs

Source: (Dewi et al., 2020)

The table above shows that RANHAM has identified strategic measures to support efforts to fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities in education. These actions include improving teachers' competencies through technical guidance in inclusive education learning, increasing the number of schools that organize inclusive education, and providing learning assistance for students with special needs.

One of the areas concerned with educational development for people with disabilities in East Java with 15.47% of the second largest relevance data nationally after West Java (Dewi et al., 2020). Barriers to mainstreaming disability issues and social inclusion in education contribute to the low participation of persons with disabilities in accessing education, ranging from primary, and secondary to tertiary levels. Many people with disabilities still face significant challenges, including limited physical access to formal educational institutions, lack of disability-friendly learning facilities, and lack of curricula and teaching methods that can adapt to their needs (Singh, 2023).

Malang City, as one of the education destinations in East Java, has launched inclusive education since 2012. This makes Malang not only known as a city of education but also as a city of inclusive education, as educational institutions at all levels, from primary education to tertiary education, accept and support children with special needs (ABK) (Malang City Government, 2012). However, based on the Identification of Problems in the implementation of local government affairs Mandatory Basic Services RKPD Malang City, one of the main problems is that inclusive education services are not yet evenly distributed (Malang City Government, 2024c). Based on the data, out of 285 primary schools in Malang City, only 95 primary schools accept students with disabilities.

Table 2.
Details of the Type and Number of Elementary Schools in Malang City

No.	School Type	Total
1	Inclusive Public Elementary School	52
2	Private Inclusive Primary School	43
3	Non-Inclusive Primary School	190
	Total	285

Source: (Putra, 2024a)

The data shows that inclusive education services in Malang City are still limited, with only 95 primary schools adopting an inclusive approach, consisting of 52 inclusive public primary schools and 43 inclusive private primary schools. Meanwhile, 190 other primary schools have not yet implemented inclusive education services. This condition emphasizes the need for further attention and policies to encourage equitable distribution of inclusive education services in all primary schools in Malang city, to ensure equal access to education for students with disabilities.

Despite the commitment to provide inclusive education, there are still gaps in access and quality of services for children with disabilities. Therefore, more intensive efforts are needed from the government, education institutions, and the community to ensure that inclusive education services are equally accessible and meet the standards needed by all children with special needs in Malang City. Education has the potential to provide the most rapid impact in the development of superior human resources, including for human resources who are people with disabilities or special needs. To support the creation of superior human resources and realize the vision of a Golden Indonesia in 2045, continuous efforts are needed to provide access to inclusive, quality education, supported by facilities and policies that are responsive to the needs of all community groups, without exception, especially in Malang City (Neolaka, 2019).

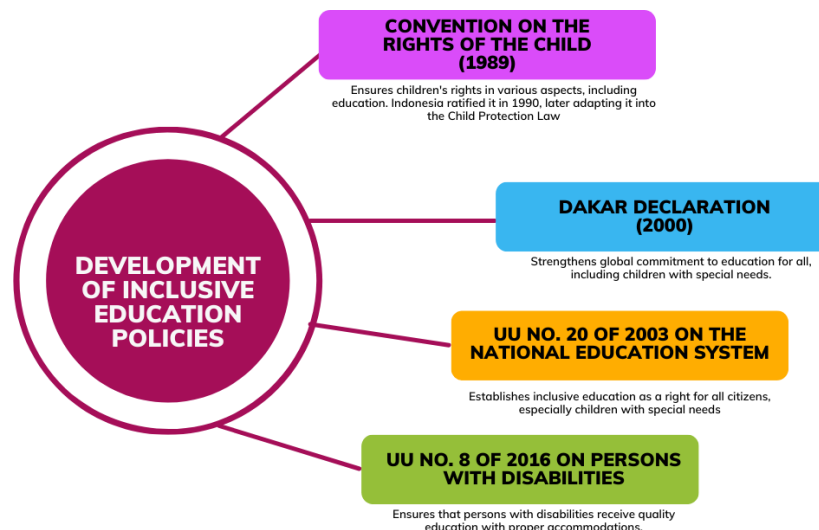
2. Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the implementation of inclusive basic education policies in Malang City, especially related to mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities in the education sector. The data analysis technique used is secondary power analysis. This approach aims to provide an in-depth description of the phenomenon studied through the interpretation of relevant secondary data. Data sources in this study were obtained from credible and relevant secondary data. The main data sources include official documents such as the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD), the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), and the Government Agency Performance Report (LKJIP) of the Malang City Government. In addition, this study also utilized literature from previous research, institutional reports, and related regulations that support the analysis of the implementation of inclusive education. Data analysis techniques were carried out with stages of collection, reduction, presentation of data, and conclusion drawing. The data obtained were thematically analyzed to identify patterns and relationships between variables related to the implementation of inclusive education policies. This approach enabled the research to produce recommendations relevant to improving inclusive basic education policy in Malang City.

3. Results and Discussion

Inclusive Primary Education Policy

Inclusive education in Indonesia is based on the principles laid out in the 1945 Constitution and Law No 20/2003 on the National Education System. Article 32 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution states that every citizen has the right to education, while Article 32 paragraph (2) confirms the state's obligation to provide basic education that is accessible to all citizens, including those with special needs. This is reinforced by Article 5 paragraph (1) of the National Education System Law, which guarantees equal rights for every citizen to obtain quality education (Romadhon et al., 2021). This law provides a strong basis for the implementation of inclusive education, which aims to provide equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their background or physical condition. In general, inclusive education policies in Indonesia are influenced by various factors, one of which is international policies.



Picture 1. The Development of Inclusive Education Policy Source: (Ikmal & Asiah, 2024)

The figure above shows the development of inclusive education policies in Indonesia based on various international regulations and commitments. Starting from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which guarantees children's rights including in the aspect of education, and has been ratified by Indonesia in 1990 as a legal basis in the Child Protection Law. Furthermore, the Dakar Declaration (2000) reinforced the global commitment to ensure education for all, including children with special needs. At the national level, Law No 20/2003 on the National Education System integrates inclusive education as part of the basic rights of citizens, especially children with special needs.

Every school in Indonesia, both public and private, is required to accept students with special needs and provide an inclusive education environment, in accordance with Law No. 8/2016 on Persons with Disabilities and Government Regulation No. 13/2020 which regulates reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. In East Java, East Java Governor Regulation No. 30/2018 on the Implementation of Inclusive Education confirms that educational institutions from primary to tertiary levels must provide special disability-friendly facilities, such as physical access to classrooms, training for educators, and appropriate teaching methods to support the active participation of students with special needs. The regulation also instructs local governments to conduct monitoring, cooperate with relevant organizations, and involve parents in creating an equal learning environment. This policy is expected to not only improve access to education in East Java but also serve as a model for other regions in implementing equitable and fair inclusive education.

The legal basis for the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia is also contained in Government Regulation No. 13/2020 on Reasonable Accommodation for Learners with Disabilities. Through this regulation, the government shows a real commitment and effort to realize equality and justice, especially for people with disabilities in various sectors, including education. Inclusive schools offer opportunities for students with disabilities to receive equal education. Even so, schools are currently prohibited from rejecting students with disabilities who enroll in inclusive classes. However, this is often not matched by an adequate number of educators. Therefore, in the process of recruiting educators, it is also necessary to add special educators who have the competence to assist students with disabilities in inclusive classes, especially in East Java.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) has released Permendikbudristek Number 48 of 2023 on the obligation of formal schools to accommodate and facilitate the needs of students with disabilities. Based on the regulation, every formal school is obliged to provide Appropriate Accommodation (AYL) in the form of budget support and funding assistance, providing facilities and infrastructure according to the needs of persons with disabilities, and adjusting the curriculum for persons with disabilities.

At the regional level, Malang City has stipulated Malang City Regional Regulation Number 2 of 2019, which in Article 49 Paragraph (2) regulates that the Regional Government has the

responsibility to provide special assistance for educational institutions implementing inclusive programs as needed. This provision is strengthened in the Implementation Guidelines for the Admission of New Learners (PPDB) for Kindergarten, Elementary, and Junior High Schools for the 2024/2025 Academic Year within the Malang City Education and Culture Office Number: 400.3.11.1/1692/35.73.401/2024 (Malang City Government, 2024b). The document outlines several criteria for accepting children with special needs in public schools, including the following:

1. Schools are required to accept children with special needs by taking into account the capacity of available resources. The number of learners with special needs in one learning group (rombel) is limited to a maximum of two students, provided that the types of obstacles do not exceed two categories. Meanwhile, for learners with severe disabilities, it is recommended to enroll in Special Schools (SLB).
2. Prospective primary school students must submit a certificate of initial assessment results (physical, psychological, academic, functional, sensory, and motor) from a psychological institution or related expert.
3. Priority is given to learners with special needs who live closest to the inclusive school, without economic discrimination or type of special need.
4. The child should be ready to learn with friends and not be hyperactive.
5. If the applicants exceed the capacity, verification will be conducted by the school.

From the above provisions, it can be concluded that the Malang City Government is committed to supporting inclusive education through clear regulations and implementation guidelines. The regulations emphasize the importance of local government provision of special assistants, admission of students with special needs by considering school capacity, and procedures that take into account the principles of equity, accessibility, and inclusion. In addition, prioritization of locations, readiness to learn, and selection mechanisms when quotas exceed capacity demonstrate efforts to ensure inclusive education is implemented effectively and sustainably.

Implementation of Inclusive Education: Solutions for Respecting, Protecting, and Fulfilling the Rights of Children with Disabilities

Inclusive education is a strategic approach to ensuring that all children, including children with disabilities, have equal rights to learn in an equal educational environment. The implementation of inclusive education is not only an effort to fulfill children's basic rights but also a form of respect for their dignity as individuals who have the potential to develop. The inclusive education system requires adaptation of the curriculum, provision of disability-friendly infrastructure, and training of special assistant teachers to create an environment that supports diversity (Somad et al., 2024). Thus, this approach not only improves the quality of learning but also strengthens the values of tolerance and diversity in the school environment. In addition, inclusive education provides a comprehensive solution to the protection and fulfillment of the rights of children with disabilities, following the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Law No. 8/2016 on Persons with Disabilities. Through this policy, children with disabilities are not only included in formal learning activities but also have access to social, emotional, and cognitive skills development. In the context of protection, inclusive education can reduce the risk of discrimination by building collective awareness in the school environment about the importance of equal rights. With effective implementation, inclusive education can create an educational ecosystem that not only educates but also protects and promotes the rights of children with disabilities. Equal access to education for all, including people with disabilities, is a fundamental right and key to inclusive social development. East Java has the second highest number of special education students in Java, with a total of 22,055 students, which is equivalent to 13.8% of the special education student population across Indonesia (Rizti, 2024).

In addition to SLB, regular schools that implement inclusive classes are also increasing, where based on data on Special Needs Students in East Java Province 2024, there are 34,196 valid students with special needs with details of 32,445 students with single disabilities and 1,751 students with multiple disabilities (Pusdatin, 2024). Meanwhile, in Malang City there are 15 schools, 1046 students, and 184 special needs teachers.

Table 3.
Number of Schools, Students, Teachers of Special Schools (SLB) in Malang City

District	Number of Schools, Students, Teachers of Special Schools (SLB) in Malang City					
	School (Unit)		Student (Person)		Teacher (Person)	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
Kedungkandang	3	3	306	306	48	45
Sukun	1	3	321	303	45	44
Klojen	1	2	88	91	14	14
Blimbing	7	7	146	130	30	32
Lowokwaru	3	4	185	190	47	47
KOTA MALANG	15	19	1046	1020	184	182

Source: (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024)

The data above shows that the distribution across sub-districts varies, with Kedungkandang sub-district having the largest number of students (306 students) and Klojen having the fewest (88 students). The overall number of teachers increased from 182 in 2022 to 184 in 2023, reflecting better support for special needs education. This shows a growing effort to improve the accessibility and quality of inclusive education, although challenges remain inequitable distribution of facilities and resources in different areas. Specifically, students who are not accommodated in special schools (SLB) are generally directed to enter inclusive schools, especially if they have mild disabilities that still allow them to adapt and follow the learning process in a regular school environment. This aims to ensure that every child, including those with special needs, still gets access to proper education according to their potential.

Table 4.
Development of the number of students in inclusive primary schools in Malang City

Year	Number of Students
2023	477
2024	572

Source: (Putra, 2024a)

The table above shows that the number of inclusive primary school students in Malang City has increased significantly from 2023 to 2024, from 477 to 572 students. This increase reflects the wider access to inclusive education for children with special needs, especially those who are not accommodated in special schools (SLB). It also shows a growing awareness among communities and educational institutions of the importance of providing a supportive learning environment for students with mild disabilities, so that they can adapt and develop according to their potential.

The implementation of inclusive education in Malang City is enshrined in 4 proposals in the musrenbang that can answer some thematic issues of disability. The first is to increase advocacy on regulations and policies for persons with disabilities, the second is to develop facilities, mechanisms, and capacity of public service personnel to be accessible to persons with disabilities, and the third is to develop social protection through benefit schemes for poor family-based persons with disabilities, and the fourth is to socialize, educate, and mainstream disability in the community to support social systems (Malang City Government, 2023). In the face of these challenges, concrete steps need to be taken to improve access to education for people with disabilities. These include increasing the number and quality of training for teaching staff, developing curricula that are more responsive to the needs of students with special needs, and changing the way society views people with disabilities. With the right strategies, it is hoped that access to education in East Java will not only improve but also provide a positive learning experience for all students, without exception in providing access to public services that have an impact for all.

Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Basic Education for Persons with Disabilities

Based on the research, the implementation of inclusive basic education for people with disabilities faces some challenges, including the limited number and competence of teachers who do not fully understand inclusive learning methods and the lack of specialized training for them. In addition, school facilities and infrastructure are often not disability-friendly, such as the lack of physical accessibility, special learning media, or adaptive technology. Another challenge is parents' low understanding of inclusive education, which is exacerbated by the community's stigma towards people with disabilities, hindering their acceptance in the school environment.

Lack of Inclusion Teachers

The implementation of inclusive basic education in Malang City is still faced with a major obstacle in the form of a lack of special assistant teachers (GPK). Based on data from the 2024 New Learner Admission (PPDB), only 95 primary schools can accept students with disabilities, while the other 190 schools cannot provide inclusive services due to the absence of GPKs. (Putra, 2024b). This limited human resource is a significant obstacle in ensuring equal access to education for children with disabilities. In response to this challenge, the Malang City Government has initiated various programs to improve schools' readiness to deliver inclusive education. These measures include training for classroom teachers in collaboration with the Special Needs Children Service Unit (UPT Pelayanan Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus, ABK), where 70 schools have so far received related training (Malang City Government, 2024a). Dinas Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Kota Malang juga menargetkan seluruh sekolah dasar menjadi sekolah inklusi. The Malang City Education and Culture Office is also targeting all primary schools to become inclusive schools. These efforts have been proven to increase the number of GPKs.

Table 5. Development of the Number of Inclusive Primary School Teachers in Malang City

Year	Number of Inclusion Teachers
2023	92
2024	190

Source: (Putra, 2024a)

However, the current classroom teacher training is still a temporary solution and cannot replace the professional competence of GPK. (Firdaus, 2022). Therefore, the acceleration of recruitment, certification of GPKs, and budget allocations to support inclusive education facilities are needed. Strengthening infrastructure, procuring learning aids, and improving accessibility are also important elements that must be considered to support the universal target of inclusive schools (Poed, 2020).

Based on the observations of several non-governmental organizations, there are several problems related to the availability of inclusive teacher human resources. The head of the Mutiara Kasih Disability Assistance Community in Malang City revealed that many schools do not have sufficient Special Assistance Teachers (GPK) to support the needs of inclusive students (Putra, 2024a). In addition, the limited number of inclusive schools in Malang City forces parents to queue up to one year in advance to enroll their children. This phenomenon reflects a significant imbalance between community demand for inclusive education services and the availability of schools capable of providing them. This highlights the need for more planned and strategic policy interventions to increase the capacity of the inclusive education system, including the provision of specialized educators and expanding the accessibility of inclusive schools.

On the other hand, the Association of Parents with Disabilities Cemorokandang, Malang City, stated that the various problems faced by persons with disabilities still do not receive serious attention from the government. This lack of policy responsiveness adds to the burden on parents, who hope that the government will provide concrete solutions to ensure the accessibility of inclusive education for children with disabilities (Arifin, 2024). This suggests that mainstreaming inclusion in education requires a stronger commitment from the government, both in terms of resource allocation, provision of facilities, and raising public awareness about the importance of equal education for all children.

Regular policy monitoring and evaluation are needed to ensure that the implementation of inclusive education is effective according to the needs of the field. With collaboration between stakeholders, it is hoped that inclusive basic education in Malang City can fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities to obtain proper and equal education.

Infrastructure Facilities

Educational facilities and infrastructure play an important role in supporting successful learning, especially in the context of inclusive education. The success of educational programs in schools is not only determined by the competence of teachers, but also by the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure and the optimization of their management (Ediyanto et al., 2023). In inclusive education, facilities, and infrastructure are crucial to ensure that the needs of learners with disabilities are met.

Table 6. Educational support facilities for children with special needs in primary schools

<i>No.</i>	<i>Type of Disability</i>	<i>Sarana Penunjang</i>
1.	Blind	1. Braille book 2. Blocks
2.	Deaf	1. Hearing aids 2. Interactive learning media 3. Learning video with sign language
3.	Mentally Disabled	1. IT-based learning media 2. Interactive learning multimedia
4.	Physically Disabled	1. Busy book 2. Adaptive sports equipment for gross motor training
5.	Emotional and Behavioral Disorders	1. Pop-up media/pop-up book 2. Story-based modules

Source: (Andriani et al., 2023)

Learning support facilities, such as assistive devices or adaptive technology, are needed to help learners with disabilities understand the subject matter. In addition, the school's physical environment should also be friendly to special needs, for example by providing ramps, accessible toilets, and flexible classrooms to accommodate different types of disabilities (Putra, 2024a). However, until now, there are still many schools that do not have facilities and infrastructure that meet inclusivity standards. The absence of such facilities not only hampers the teaching and learning process but also limits the opportunity for students with disabilities to develop optimally (Rasmitadila et al., 2022). Therefore, investing in the development and procurement of disability-friendly infrastructure should be a priority in inclusive education policy.

Resistance from Parents and Community

The lack of inclusive education in Malang City poses a major challenge for parents of children with disabilities in finding appropriate education for their children. While many parents want an education that can teach their children to adapt to the social environment, they often face difficulties in accessing available inclusive schools. On the other hand, there is still a lot of negative stigmas towards people with disabilities, especially among parents with children with disabilities who feel embarrassed to send their children to school, so this is an obstacle in fulfilling the right to inclusive education in Malang City (Fitriana, 2015).

People with disabilities are often perceived as a source of shame or family disgrace so families choose to confine people with disabilities at home and not allow them to interact with the environment, go to school, or work (Dewi et al., 2020). The stigma negative assessments and attitudes towards people with disabilities result in the internalization of community values and stigmas into people with disabilities. This condition is further exacerbated by the limited capabilities of persons with disabilities, which is characterized by the fact that the majority of persons with disabilities (63%) have an elementary school education and below (Wray et al., 2022).

On the other hand, the problem of stigma is often a big obstacle for students with disabilities to get equal access to education. There is a perception that students with disabilities

have lower graduation rates than other students, which in turn affects their motivation. This stigma even leads some students to be reluctant to disclose their disability status for fear of discrimination, even though it could help them obtain the proper facilities and support (Virgiana et al., 2024). This directly constrains the government's efforts to realize a fully inclusive education system for all students. Therefore, it requires active collaboration from various stakeholders, especially the immediate environment and parents, who are expected to provide full support without feeling ashamed of their child's condition. Parents who provide strong support to their children have a significant impact on their children's mental health and tend to be better prepared to face various challenges that may arise during the child's development (Anggraeni & Hijrianti, 2023; Virgiana et al., 2024). Support provided in the form of emotional, instrumental, and informational support can contribute to strengthening children's self-confidence, improving their adaptability, and encouraging their active participation in an inclusive education environment.

4. Conclusion

Inclusive basic education policy in Indonesia, especially in Malang City, has made significant progress, although it still faces various challenges. The policies stipulated in Law No 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities and Government Regulation No 13 of 2020 provide a strong legal basis to ensure inclusive education for students with special needs. In addition, the East Java Governor's Regulation No 30 of 2018 reinforces the local government's commitment to providing disability-friendly education facilities. However, the main problem hindering the implementation of this policy is the shortage of trained special educators and inadequate infrastructure. Data shows that although the number of schools offering inclusive services is increasing, the facilities and support needed to support students with disabilities are still limited.

Therefore, this study recommends increasing the number and quality of training for educators, especially Special Assistance Teachers (GPK), to ensure that inclusive education services can run optimally. Local governments also need to increase investment in the provision of disability-friendly facilities and infrastructure in each school and expand the accessibility of educational facilities to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In addition, changes in the mindset of the community and parents towards inclusive education need to be strengthened through more intensive education and socialization so that negative stigma towards students with disabilities can be minimized. With these concrete steps, it is hoped that inclusive basic education in East Java, as well as throughout Indonesia, can be realized more evenly and provide an equal learning experience for all students without exception.

However, this study has several theoretical and practical limitations. Theoretically, it has not fully explored the social and cultural factors influencing the acceptance of inclusive education within the community. The policy implementation model used remains general and has not adopted a more holistic, multidisciplinary approach. Practically, limitations in data and access to inclusive schools in Malang City mean that this analysis may not fully represent conditions across the entire region. Furthermore, challenges in measuring policy effectiveness based on the available indicators may affect the accuracy of the recommendations. Given these limitations, future research should delve deeper into the social, cultural, and economic aspects that influence the effectiveness of inclusive education policies and develop more specific, evidence-based implementation models at the local level. Through more comprehensive strategic measures, it is hoped that inclusive basic education in Indonesia can be realized more equitably and sustainably.

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