

INDONESIA SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (INA-SES): CURRENT ISSUES AND INITIATIVES

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with a new policy direction of how to fulfill equity and quality of education for primary and secondary education in Indonesia and the way in which a new initiative is applied. It began with understanding barriers to achieve universal basic education. Along with schools for disability, many children living with geographical and socioeconomic disadvantages have difficulties to get into schools; even they drop out of school. This paper, then, tries to identify special education services (SES) to fulfill children's needs. Inclusive special education are adopted and designed to solve problems encountered. Special Education Services (SES) model is introduced as a way to improve equity and quality of learning process. This paper ended up with a conclusion, further education policy and its implication.

Keywords: Universal Education and Special Education Services

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a complex geography, archipelagic nation, and still has challenges to fulfill her basic education performances. Achieving education for all is not easy although by the end of 2015 all of targeted population have to fulfill their basic education with a certain quality (Jalal, 2009).

Along with development issues, many children in Indonesia attain education with a limited quality. Various researches consistently observed that Indonesian children fell into lower learning outcomes comparatively in an international standard (Jalal et al. 2009, Abbas, 2003). Math, sciences and reading skills of Indonesian children are among the lowest achievement, at least since the last couple of years. Even after efforts have been made to improve through teachers' certification, the impact of payment was not significant in improving learning outcomes of Indonesian children (Abbas, 2013; Elfindri, 2013).

With this complex situation, some of children drop out due to various reasons. Geographic, social, economic and cultural disadvantages are among factors contributing to new educational achievements (Elfindri, Harizal and Mudjito, 2013). If there is a limited effort given to make sure their education sustainability, Indonesia will get a new social problems, where much of children will drop out of their school.

There are at least two challenges in an attempt fulfill basic universal education. First, providing education for children with disability. Initiatives to improve the access to targeted population have been intensively made by the Indonesia directorate of special basic education, Ministry of Education and Culture (Mudjito at all., 2012), through inclusive education for children with disability (*Pendidikan Berkebutuhan Khusus, PK*). Second, for normal children living in disadvantage regions, they are currently in schools with least quality, as well as children who are already out of school system. Special Education Services (*Pendidikan Layanan Khusus, PLK*) are introduced as a strategy to achieve basic human needs at an individual level, along with

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improvement in educational process (Elfindri et al., 2013).

This paper is aimed at examining new initiatives given by government of Indonesia to improve the achievement of both equity and quality in education. The first section is looking into a new dimension of children greatly believed to have limited support where a special education services is offered as a way to meet their education needs. Section three analyzes a new approach to improve demand and supply of education where good access can be achieved, section four examines how the special education is applied and lastly, the paper will end up making discussion and implication.

2 ACCESSES TO UNCERTAIN EQUITY

Indonesia has a new challenge in meeting a high demand for primary and secondary level of education (Hill and Tee Kian Wee, 2009). According to Long Term Education Planning, the target of achieving equity, counting from access of children to primary education and lower secondary will be achieved universally by the 2015 (Bappenas, BPS and World Bank, 2001). Currently, the net enrolment rate (NER) was achieved at the rates of 95,7% of primary education and 78,8% for secondary education respectively. The rates get improved slightly compared to condition in the initial year of the 2000.

Among 51,7 millions of Indonesia children, around 8,1 millions of children were not registered in formal educational system at various levels of education. No less important, much of them were classified as the first opportunity (World Bank, 2007)³, where around 7,5 millions were not engaged in any level of education and never attain school before. Some of children were already registered, however, they dropped out around 616,4 thousand yearly. They were classified as second opportunity groups (World Bank, 2007)⁴. Children who drop out of schools as well as those who are not classified as students any more are a new social problem. With their uneducated skill, those children got married earlier and entered the job with the worst living standard. The latter impact is to perpetuate poverty.

Table 1: Number of Indonesian Children out of school system, 2012

Age Group	Number of Children (Million)	Not in School		Drop Out		Total out of education system
		%	n	%	n	
7-12	26,5	(4,25)	1.126.250	(0,67)	182.773	1.409.023
13-15	12,6	(21,2)	2.671.200	(2,21)	209.976	2.881.176
16-18	12,6	(21,3)	2.683.800	(12,6)	223.676	2.907.250
Total	51,7		7.481.250		616.425	8.097.675

Source: BPS, various issues.

We do not know exactly the characteristics of children who are out of educational system. If disability handicapped children, inclusive education may be a good way to keep them in schools. We do not have adequate data to confirm how much children suffer from mental and physical disabilities. Some estimated that around 1-2% from population suffering from disabilities.

Out of physical and mental disabilities, the majority of children out of educational system are among those who are disadvantage in two classifications. First they are disadvantaged due to geographic allocations. This include children living in remote villages such as the ones living in the borderless community, coming from fishery households, living in small islands, living in the forest community and some other remote characteristics. Some researchers confirm (Elfindri, 2007; Elfindri et al., 2013) that children living in such regions who currently go to schools face some problems, such as discontinuing their education process, limited education process with low quality, or even the continuous rate of poor further level of education.

³ First opportunity is a terminology for children who are never get schooling at the school age period due to various reasons.

⁴ Second opportunity is a terminology for children who are ever attend schooling. However, they were drop out due to various reasons. World Bank (2007) identifies the second opportunity have to give to children, either formal or informal schooling. When the first and second opportunity do not taken into policy, children will soon influx into labor market with limited skills. According to our calculation, to extend one year average schooling of society, the need 5 year education development (See Elfindri et al., 2013).

In addition, the continuous rate of children living in geographically disadvantage areas are among the problems mostly encountered. Schools in such areas are often poor, both in terms of learning process and outcomes. Teachers are unavailable with quality education qualifications, and teachers' absence rate are also so high (Jalal et al. 2009).

A study of how schools in remote areas during the 1990s in Indonesia confirm that school dropouts are among those who are in the fourth class and the sixth class students. Their rates continued low (Elfindri, 2007). A study of various countries reports on dropout rates varied from one study to another (King , 2005).

Second, school children have socioeconomic and special problems of their parents due to various reasons, such as poverty, instability of parental marriage, orphan child, as well as environment related problems etc.

There are some problems existing for those children who are currently enrolled in education systems with the geographical problems. For those who are still in the schools, the majority of children are still in schools with limited quality. Remitted schools are even available with limited quality of teachers, poor learning environment, and the sustainability of their education. Some estimated that around 15-20% of schools did not achieve a minimum basic standard (Elfindri, Rimilton, and Miaz, 2013), and more than 60% of teachers are unqualified. If children are still in school, they are not able to continue their study due to unavailable schools operational in their village and its surroundings.

3 ACCESSES TO UNCERTAIN QUALITY

More importantly, if the education process may perpetuate poverty, children in the disadvantage regions or from socioeconomic problems attain poor quality schools. Learning process is laden with poor quality of teachers, including limited teaching materials and cognitive development. Children also do not get any skills acquired during their time in schools.

Bad schools infrastructures may also contributed to low quality of education. So, when they continue further education, children often lag behind in their final tests. In this case, approach has been proposed though increasing demand and supply of education (Handa, 2002). Glewee and Jacoby (1994) look at the fulfillment of minimum schools buildings may attract children to continue their education attainment.

A limited numbers of researches are available to see how certification can contribute to various measures, such as lecturers performances and learning outcomes. Various studies are available suggesting the relationships between payments and teacher performances (Levy, 2009; Duflo et al. 2012). Some researches reported teachers certification for Indonesia and its impact on performance (World Bank, 2013; Abbas, 2013, Elfindri, 2012). A recent effort is available to look at how compensation influenced the participation rates of teachers in school in India. Since the absence rate of Indian teachers is quite high in an international standard, introducing compensation has resulted in increasing teacher participation in teaching process. Incentives also increase learning outcomes of children (Duflo, et al. 2012). Schools with higher salary for teachers are less likely to improve effective class, compared to controlled schools. A similar study is conducted to see how teachers performance after an incentive for Israeli teacher (Levy, 2009). By applying a random trial method, the study observes that incentives increase teacher performance through preparation for intensive work, and latter for learning outcomes of the students.

In contrast, in Indonesia context, there is a limited survey showing the effect of certification on learning outcomes. World Bank (2013) in its recent publication "*Spending More or Spending Better: Improving Education Financing in Indonesia*", does not support the improvement of teachers incentive system for children learning outcomes in Indonesia. Hafid Abbas (*Kompas*, 12 June, 2013) "*Misteri Pelaksanaan Sertifikasi*", also observed that. In general Abbas failed to fathom significant improvements in teachers performance after teacher certificated. He argued, certification is only a matter of administrative tasks and the process of filing in the instruments were often found to be corrupt.

In the mid-1995, one study observed that there was no difference in cognitive achievements among provinces in Indonesia, with West Java and Yogyakarta achieving the most successful achievements in education. A study found that additional out of school learning has contributed to learning outcomes (Mahondas, 1997). Teachers' certification is one of the new instruments to improve learning outcomes. A study conducted by ADB evaluated that since certification begins, there are no differences in children's learning outcomes taught by either certified or uncertified teachers.

4 ACCESS TO UNSKILLED

Having a large numbers of Indonesia workers as unskilled labors, a serious problem also occurred for those children not in education system anymore. Their education is not adequate and has limited skills.

4.1 Approach of Previous Policy

Several initiatives have been implemented for improving access and quality education. Following to decentralization policy, there is no clear policy from one province to another. A national budget allocation to education sectors will force local government to allocate budget to education sector by at least 20% of national budget systems. Such budget is allocated to various central government initiatives such as for teachers' salary, BOS, as well as for improvements. The previous policies have been summarized in Table 2 below.

It is often argued that spending for education does not automatically improve learning outcomes, since a specific policy is not designed at improving what is a major problem encountered at the school level. Allocation of budget to improve teacher qualification through teacher training or qualification is an important policy. Also, improvement in teaching and learning process through improvement in books at a certain subjects (i.e., science, math atc.) may be more cost effective than distributing small resources for each subjects. As the World Bank concluded, distributing educational budget to make better result is a relevant policy.

Table 2. Various Policies Adopted to Improve Equity and Quality of Education in Indonesia

Approach of previous children	Types of Policy	Failures
Integrated lower education and primary education building	Middle level building is combined with primary education	-Quality is difficult to improve -Teacher is difficult to distribute and assign
Teachers are distributed to remote schools	Teachers are assigned to participate in remote schools	-High absence rates - Low sustainability - Low standard
Uniform schools in remote areas	Children are not getting a standard learning process due to limited control and assessment	-Less monitoring and evaluation
Non formal education through Paket A, B, and C	Children are allowed to test through "Paket A, B and C"	-Difficult to determine learning improvement
Teachers' certification	Teachers are certified, and receive more for compensation	-No improvement in learning outcomes -Teachers' certification does not improve teachers' skills in teaching
"Bantuan Operasional Sekolah" BOS	An employ for direct assistance to school level"	- No specific policy is fulfilled

5 INDONESIA SPECIAL THEMATIC EDUCATION PROJECT (ISTED): A BREAKTHROUGH APPROACH

5.1 SES Model and Implementation

To achieve universal education, there are two priorities intensively adopted. First, special education for children with disabilities (SED) through special education, and secondly special education services (SES). Both strategies are aimed at reaching unreachable population and included as inclusive education.

The SED policy has intensively provided a new center of providing education for children with disabilities. At the first stage, the 8 regional centers of special schools have been established. Efforts have also been made

to encourage non-government organization involving in providing schools. Under social organization, social assistance funding supports schools. This has made many schools run in various places in Indonesia.

In addition, to provide adequate services and good learning process scholarships are available for those teachers who are willing to improve their teaching skills, by providing them scholarship to pursue their undergraduate education in special education.

Secondly, starting at 2012, government of Indonesia, through directorate of basic education implemented special education services (SES) for children with normal condition on condition that they come from geographically disadvantage areas as well as due to social, economic, and cultural disadvantages.

Looking into earlier initiation, there are various special problems identified and need special education services as follow:

1. Education for remote areas (SES-01)
2. Education for restricted forestry children (SES-02)
3. Education for fisheries and small island (SES-03)
4. Education for border region (SES-04)
5. Education for small island and archipelago (SES-05)
6. Education for fishing households (SES-06)
7. Education for street children (SES-07)
8. Education for orphan children (SES-08)
9. Education for children living with grand mother (SES-09)
10. Education for "sea tribes, suku laut" (SES-10).
11. Education for "remote tribes" (SES-11)
12. Education for 'ex- natural disaster" (SES-12)
13. Education for jailed children (SES-13)
14. Education for drug and street children (SES-14)
15. Education for others characteristics (SES-15)

According to the first phase, for the first five SES is specially made using a new initiative from central government budget. SES-01 to SES-05 in different locations which is summarized in Table 3. The objective of the program is to fulfill basic education for those children classified in the above mentioned.

At the earlier stage, all the targeted areas are determined according to the problems of education encountered. Each of sub districts is chosen according to the problems of education. After selecting five sub districts efforts have been made to set up a special task team of each district that would be in charge as a coordinator of implementation of SES model. All special task forces have been trained about the concept of SES. They are allowed to improve their understanding with each member team.

Table 3: SES Models and Its Implementation

Characteristics of schools	SES Models	Implementation
1. Pasaman (West Sumatra). Remotes children in the two sub districts	1. Children at the 6 th grades from remote schools attend 'inclusive schools' at kecamatan (subdistrict)	1. Success rate 99%, with 266 children following the program 2. They live in community boarding with "Pamong" teachers 3. No children absent, and they are able to follow learning process in 'sekolah inti'
2. Kaur (Bengkulu). Forest children	1. Children from forest were put in boarding schools 2. All cost covered by government's budget	1. New locations of living and schooling with new atmosphere, all children follow learning process in boarding schools 2. Special attention given by school committee board, 3. Improve children's skills

3. Lombok Timur of children from remote island, dropout rate is high due to working child	1. Small boat is used as school building, and education process inside the boat 2. Children are returned to schools	1. Learning process is adjusted to children's time. 2. All children follow learning process inside the small boat after working 3. The participation rate of children at school is 100%
4. Border areas in West Kalimantan	1. Children are selected and teachers are trained to improve teaching and learning process	1. Improvement in children learning process, 2. Capacity building of teachers
5. Urban risks children in Karimun, Riau Kepulauan	1. Children are assigned in urban schools 2. They attend school after working	1. Adjusting working time to keep children at school after working in the sea 2. Improve quality of learning process

Second stage was to determine schools, which included the main target of SES implementation. The data is collected to determine individual child, schools characteristics, and parents are also asked for their attainment as the socialization is introduced. This is important to make sure that the participation of parents may influence the success of SES implementation.

The final stage is implementation of activities. Each district received Rp 900 million of social grants. The contract was made between Directorate of PK/LK and District Task team. The contracts were direct, and sufficient guidelines are used as a basis to make each of decision. The school funds can be used as preparation for activities, launching, transportation costs, living costs, capacity building of teacher, and books allowances, school bag, etc. Money can be allocated along with children needs. The duration of activities was three months, due to the availability of education budget from central government.

The model of SES can be seen from Table 3, where each sub district has different problems. The implementation of SES model was also different, according to cost per-capita used, and the way in which priorities are given during their implementation.

5.2 Experiences and Implication

Pasaman and Lombok Timur are the two areas with two different approaches introduced. One of the good indicators is the participation of children in the project from the beginning to the end was almost successful as they follow learning process in a new environment. According to report given by the tasks team of the two districts, the class is so effective, and children express their seriousness and happiness in schools.

One of the key successes of the two SES model, Pasaman and Lombok Timur is believed to do with involving parents at the earlier of the project. A sufficient socialization to parents may make parents enthusiastic in sending their children to schools. According to various studies, similar to the SES experiences, Perssons (1998) observed that adult literacy campaigns area nearly 10 times more cost effective than the income intervention and 1.5 and 2.5 better than building more schools.

Another specific model of the Kaur is that boarding schools are introduced as a new system adopted. Forest children who do not attain schools were fully subsidized by the project, so it is make parents easier send their children to schools. Another experience was that the implementation of integrated boarding schools in KAUR SES model as a result of participation of local government to make the project success. As Ferguson (1989) argues that the need to adopt tactics was to improve inclusive education and implementation. The easy way to adopt a new method much depends on involvement of school committee board, teachers, school head master, and local government.

The implication of the first year implementation of the five SES Model may have a new method to fulfill equity in education. Special Education Services (SES) is a new initiative of making school run for children who are living in geographical disadvantage regions as well as children who are living with socio economic cultural backwardness.

As equity in education can be achieved, some other implications of SES model are that the central schools ("Sekolah Inti") may improve too in terms of teachers quality and learning process. In the implementation of the first year, we believe that effective class was observed and children get well and happy to follow learning process in a new environment.

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