District Readiness for Inclusive Education at Wonogiri, Central Java, Indonesia[1]

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ABSTRACT--- Inclusive *education has been the most popular trend in our educational system for the last two decades. The UNESCO supported movement started to be adopted by the Indonesian government in early 2000s. Since then, the number of inclusive schools has grown very fast. One of the ongoing problems is that this fast quantitative growth is not followed by qualitative growth.*

The aim of this research wasto investigate the readiness of Wonogiri District to implementinclusive education.Certain factors (prevalence of special needs children, supporting facilities, and attitudesof community) predicting the inclusion were identified and measured in this regard.

Data were collected from teachers, principals and parents using a likert type attitude scale and a questionnaire.

The results indicated that the prevalence of special needs children is 16% of the school aged population, mostly learning disabled children. The majority of them were in regular schools. General education facilities were adequate in most schools, but there were limited special facilities for special needs students. Teachers had limited experience related to inclusive education. Similarly, access to special facilities were limited due to the limited number of special schools in the region. The supporting condition was that parents and educators showed positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Based on the findings, workshops about inclusive education for reguler teachers and the establishment of new special schools were recommended.

Keywords--- inclusive education, attitudes, supporting facilities, manpower

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1. INTRODUCTION

The right for education of all Indonesian children, including those with special needs, is guaranteed by article 31 item 1 of the 1945 Constitution and chapter III item 5 of the 2003 Law of National Education System. It means that children with special needs have the same right for education as their (normal) peers do.

Up to 1984, education for children special needs in Indonesia was served only in five types of special schools, i.e. type A for the visually impaired, type B for those with hearing impairment, type C for the intellectual impairment, type D for the physically impaired, and type E for the emotionally / socially disturbed. Only about 3000 children with special needs went to school (Directorate of Special Education, 1985). That figure was small, compared with the 26 million rate of primary school enrollment at the same time.

Part of the implementation of a nine year compulsory education policy, the government established 200 special primary schoolsin districts that did not own any special schools in 1984 (Sunardi, 1997). Different from special schools which admitted only the same type of disabililties, special primary schools admitted all types of disablties at the primary school level. In addition, the government also employed new special education teachers as teacher aides in a few regular schools that admmitted visually impaired children with normal intellectual abilities. Those schools were then called integrated schools, using the same curriculum, teaching – learning activities, and evaluation for all students. So, three types of schools for SEN children were available then, i.e special schools, special primary schools, and integrated schools. Thedevelopment of these schools was not promising, partly caused by the policy of national examination for all students and annual publication of school ranking based on the national examination results. No principals wanted their schools to be at the lower ranks because of the presence of students with special needs in their schools. Even some of them no

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longer admitted students with special needs and the teacher aides changed their positions from special education teachers to guidance – counselling teachers.

The number of special schools has grown rapidly in the last decades, mostly initiated by private foundations. However, still, geograghic conditions seem to become a new problem in the provision of education for children with special needs in Indonesia. Special schools are mostly located in the town areas. In the rural areas, however, people live in villages with geographical conditions that prevent them from having inter-village connection and communication. Consequently, most children with special needs do not go to schools, especially those from the low social economic families. To send their children to special schools will require high cost, whereas nearby regular schools refuse to admit these children for many practical reasons.

One of many alternatives of provision of education for special educational needs children is inclusive education in which special educational needs children are served in nearby reguler schools with their peers. Sapon-Shevin (O'Neil,1994/1995) defined inclusive education as an educational service system which requires that all soecial educational needs children are served in nearby regular schools along with their peers. Inclusive education requires restruckturalization in schools to become a community which will support the fulfillment of individual needs of each child, rich in learning resources and supports from all teachers and students.

According to Stainback and Stainback (1990), "inclusive schools are schools which admit all students in the same classroom. These schools provide proper and challenging education programs but suitable for the competence and meet the needs of individual students. Teachers' support and assistance are also available for students to succeed in their education. An inclusive school is also a schools where everyone is welcome and belongs to the class and to the school community.

A similar definition is made by Staub and Peck (1994/1994) that inclusive education is the placement of children with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in regular classrooms. This definition stresses that regular classroom is the most relevant placement for whatever levels or types of disabled children.

Those definitions suggest that in the context of inclusive education, all children with special needs go to regular schools with their peers. In practice, however, the term inclusive education is often used interchangeably with mainstreaming (Vaughn, Bos, danSchumm, 2000) which theoritically means the provision of proper educational services for special needs children based on their individual needs. The placemet of a child is flexible and must be in the least rectrictive environment, selected among many placement altertnatives, including full time regular class, regular class with additional service in the classroom, regular class with additional pull out services, special class with opportunities to be in regular classfor specific subjects, full ime special class, special schools, and special places. The philosophy is inclusive, but in practice, a variety of placement alternatives are provided.

One of the most important characteristics of inclusive education is a cohesive community, responsive to the individual needs of each student. Sapon-Shevin (O'Neil,1994/1995) lists five instructional profiles in an inclusive school:

1. Inclusive education creates and keeps a warm classroom community which accepts heterogenity and values differences. Teachers have the responsibility of creating classroom condition which fully admits all students, focussing social behavior that accepts differences in abilitiy, phisical condition, scosial economic, races, religions, etc.
2. Inclusive education means implementing a multilevel and multimodality curriculum. Teaching a classrooom designed to be heterogenious requires fundamental curriculum modification. Teachers of an inclusive classroom will consistently move from highly structured and textbook based instruction or bassal materials to one that involves more cooperative, thematic, problem solving, critical thinking based activities and authentic assessment.
3. Inclusive education means preparing and motivating teachers to teach interactively. Changes in curriculum is closely related to changes in teaching methods. A traditional classroom where a single teacher teacher struggles to meet the needs of all students in one class will have to be replaced with a model of instruction where students work collaboratively, teach each other, actively engaged in thier own learning and that of others. The relation of cooperative learning and inclusive classroom is obvious, all students learn in the same classroom are not to compete, but to learn from each other.
4. Inclusive ducation means providing continuous supports for teachers and eliminating barriers related to professional isolation. Although a teacher is surrounded by many other people, teaching can be an isolated profession. An important aspect in inclusive education includes team teaching, collaboration and consultation, a variety of assessing knowledge, skills, and providing supports to other professions. Teamwork between teachers and other professions is required, such as paraprofessionals, speech theraphists, school counsellers. Although training is needed to be able to collaborate with others smoothly, such collaboration can be achieved.

5. Inclusive education means meaningfully involving parents in the planning process. Inclusive education relies heavily on parents' feedback on their children' education, for example in their involvement in the preparation of Individualized Education Plan.

Inclusive classrooms admit all children with a variety of condition, served by a variety of professions so that students individual needs can be met. This will require a lot of changes in the traditional system of instruction which is still widely used in the existing Indonesian schools.

The development of Inclusive education in Indonesia has become one program of the Directorate of Special Education since 2001 (Nasichin, 2001). It was the Center for Policy and Educational Innovation Research of the Ministry of National Education Research and Development Board that initiated inclusive schools in the District of Wonosari Yogyakarta (Suroto, 2002). This peoneer project was then supported by the publication of Guide for the Special Education by the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education in 2003 which specifies that every district shall operate at least four inclusive schools, consisting of one primary, one secondary, one general high, and one vocational high schools. This publication had a tremendeous effect, the booming of inclusive schools in the country. By 2008, there have been 925 inclusive schools and 135 accelerated schools established. The peak of the policy is the enforcement of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education in 2009 which specifies that every district shall oparete at least one inclusive highschool and every sub-district shall oparate atleast one inclusive primary and one inclusive secondary schools.

Sunardi et el (2010) investigated the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia, focussing on the institutional management, student admission / indentification, assessment, instruction, evaluation, and supports for inclusive schools. Data were collected using questionnaires and the respondents were 186 schools with 24,412 student enrollment, 3,419 (12%) of them were students with special needs. Of the 3,419 special needs students, 56% were males. The results showed that in institutional management, the majority of schools had developed strategic plans for inclusive education, legally appointed coordinators, involved related stakeholders in the planning, and held regular coordination meetings. However, most of them had not restructured their school organizations. In student admission, 54% of those schools set quotas for special needs students, only 19% conducted a selection process with different criteria for special needs students. In instruction, 68% reported that they had modified instructional processes, however, only few schools provided special resources for students with visual disorders, speech - hearing impairments, psysical disabilities. In evaluation, more than 50% reported that they had modified test items, test administration, and progress report systems. Most of them also admitted that the presence of special needs students had degraded that national exam mean scores. In supports for inclusion, mosts schools relied mainly on the Directorate of Special Education and the provincial or district governments for access for teacher training and financial supports.

As a new policy, the implementation of inclusive education requires a lot of preparation. Inclusive education requires competent teachers working with heterogeneous classrooms, specific media and resources for special needs students, and positive attitudes of parents and community. Resource sharing network can actually be established among inclusive schools with such other available resouces as nearby special schools or health centers. By such network, inclusive schools can utilize teachers, special media, and other resources of nearby special schools or health centers. The problem is that there is a large variety of the existence of the support resources. The coverage of subdistricts vary, some have narrow coverages, others have very large coverages. All sub-districts have already owned pbulic health senters, but special schools exist in only a limited number of sub-disricts.An accurate data base is required for the development of inclusive education

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a descriptive / survey research focusingon developing a data base for the implementation of inclusive education in the District of Wonogiri, one of the largest districts located in the southeast part of Central Java province, Indonesia.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this research is to provide data base for the development of inclusive education in the district of Wonogiri, focusing on the following three predictors.

1. The prevalence of special needs children
2. Existing support resources for inclusive education

3. Attitudes towards inclusive education

Table 1 shows the types of data and instruments used in collecting them.

Table 1: <u>Instruments</u>

objectives	data	instruments
1	Prevalence classification of special needs children	questionnaire
2	Available resources supporting inclusive education	questionnaire
3a	Community's attitudes	attitude scale
3b	Teachers' attitudes	attitude scale
3c	Principals'attitudes	Attitude scale
3d	Parents'attitudes	Attitude scale

The attitude scale used was a likert type. The original version consisted of 50 positive and negative statements. Table 2 shows the blue print of the scale.

Table 2: Attitude scale blue print

COMPONENT	INDICATOR	POSITIVE ITEMS	NEGATIVE ITEMS	TOTAL
Cognitive	Knowledge and understanding of special needs children	4	3	7
	Knowledge and understanding of inclusive education	5	1	6
Affective	Agreement / disagreement to the existence of special needs children in regular schools	9	10	19
Connative	Agreement / disagreement to the roles of comuunity	11	7	18

The scala was then tried out to 35 respondents consisting of non-special education university students, parents of special needs students, parents of non-special needs students, inclusive school teachers, and regular school teachers. The tryout result showed that only 35 items were valid with a Spearman Brown reliability coefficience of 0.865.

3. FINDINGS

1. Prevalence of special needs children

Questionnaires were sent to all 856 primary schools in 25 sub-districts, but only 676 schools returned them. Much later, it was found out that schools which did not return the questionnaires were from the same sub-district, Wuryantoro, due to some miscommunication.
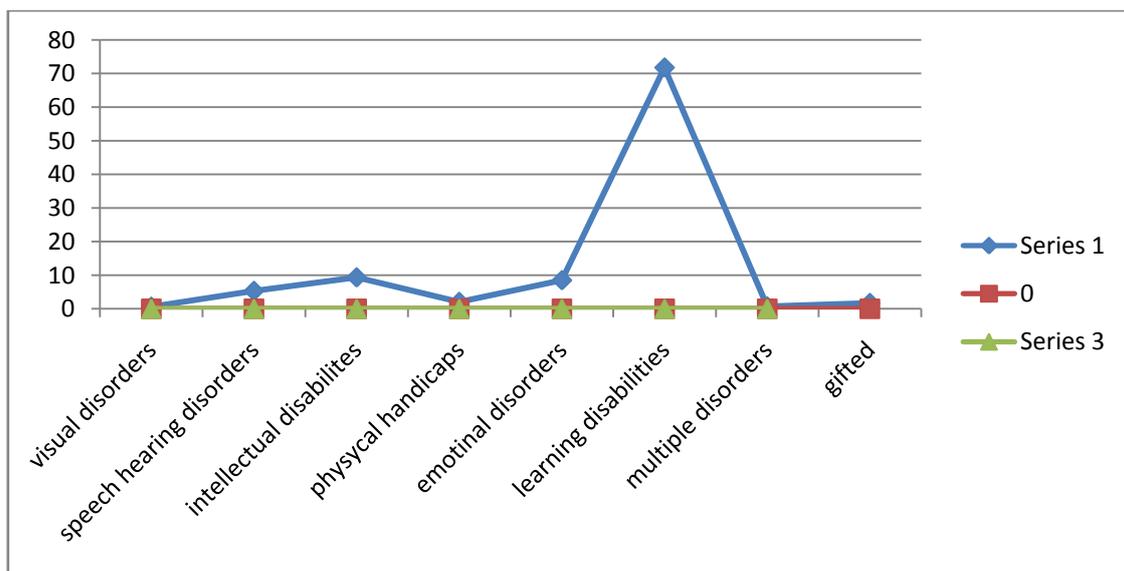
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Fidure 1: <u>Classification of special needs children</u>

Based on the analysis to 676 questionnaires from 24 sub-districts, the population of primary schools students was 68,547, consisting of 35,563 males (51.88%) and 32,984 females(48.12%). The prevalence of special needs students was 16% (1,850 students), cocnsisting of 1,224 males (67,31%) and 606 females (32.69%). The majority of these children were already in schools, mostly learning disabled or those with mild disabilities in regular schools. Only a few who were identified not going to school, they were children with severe handicaps who lived far from special schools.

Figure 1 presents the classification of the existing children with special needs in Wonogiri (minus sub-distrist of Wuryantoro). As seen from the table, more than 70% of the identified special needs children were learning disabled.

2. Existing Support Resources for inclusive education

(i)Facilities
There were two types of learning facilities, i.e.general and special facilities. General facilities refer tosuch facilities as classrooms, laboratory equipment, training equipment, library, teachers and headmaster offices, school health unit, conselling spaces, gymnasyum, toilets, and canteens. Those facilities were available in most primary schools in Wonogiri with a variety of condition.

Special facilities are those needed by children with special needs, such as specific mediaand equipment for students with visual impairment, speech / hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, physical handicaps, learning disabilites, emotional disorders, or gifted. Such facilities were available only in special schools, not in most regular schools.

(ii)Human resources
Specific training and experience are required for teachers to be able to work with special needs students in inclusive classrooms. The Directorate of Special Education has allocated budget for teacher training in inclusive setting every year. The grant given to peoneering inclusive schools in the last five years could be used for teacher training, workshops, visits, even providing specific educational facilities for special needs children.

Data indicated that only 412 (6.5%) of the existing 6339 primary school teachers in the District of Wonogiri (minus Wuryantoro sub-district) had some experiences with inclusive education. The experinces included workshop / training (218 or 3.4%), visits to inclusive schools (49 or 0.8%), resource persons (24 or 0.4%), and teaching inclusive schools (121 or 1.9%)

(iii)Accessibility
Very limited resources are available to accessed for inclusive education, including a few hospitals in the district capitol, public health centers in every sub-district, and five special schools in three sub-districts (three schools inWonogiri, one in Ngadirojo, and one in Tirtomoyo)

3. Attitudes of community toward inclusive education

Using a likert type scaleconsisting of 35 items with five options, attitudes toward inclusion can be categorized as negative (35.00 – 87.5), neutral (87.5 –132.5), and positive (132.5 – 175).

Community's attitudes

In general, communities' attitudes toward inclusion tend to the positive direction. The attitude scores distribution is presented in figure 2.
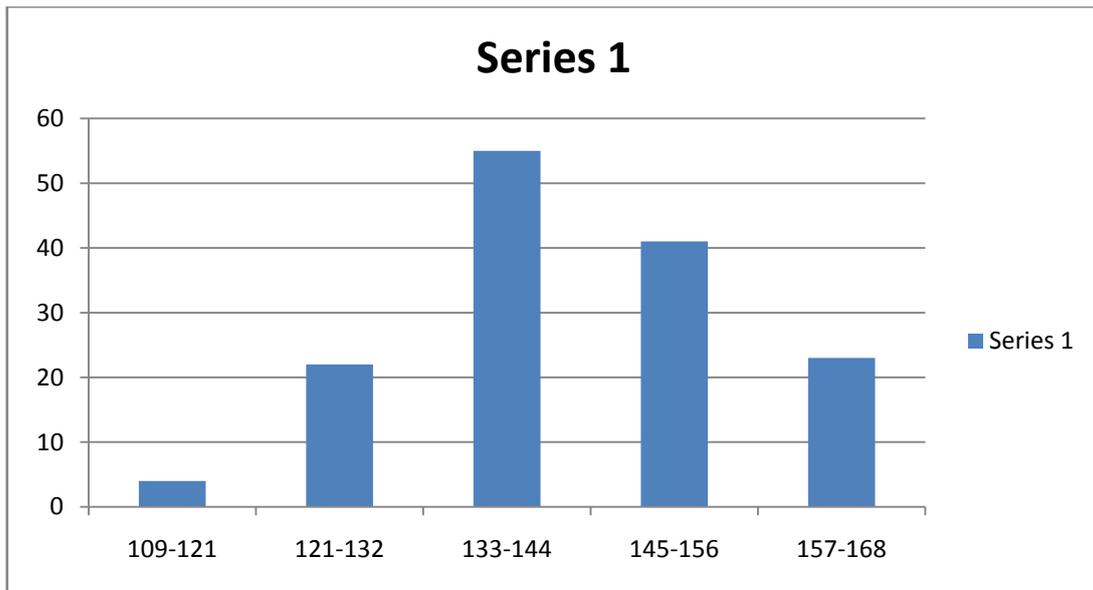
Figure 2: Comuunity's attitudes

Figure 2 shows that 23 (15.86%) of the respondents had attitude scores between 157 – 168, fourty one repondents (28.28%) had scores between 145 – 156, fifty five (37.94%) had scores between 133 – 144, twenty two (15.17%) scored between 121-132 and only four respondents (2.75%) had scored between 109-120. The distribution shows that the lowest score was 109 which belonged to the neutral category. More than 82% of the community had positive attitudes, and none showed negative attitudes.

Principals' attitudes

Principals' attitudes towardthe inclusion is presented in figure 3. As shown in figure 3, five (20%) of the principals had attitude scores between 130 – 136, three (12%) scored between 137-144, another five(20%) scored between 145 - 152, nine (36%) had scores between 153 – 160, and three (12%) scored between 161 – 168. The lowest score was 130, which belonged to the neutral category. None of them shown negative attitudes, whereas the majority fell into the positive category.
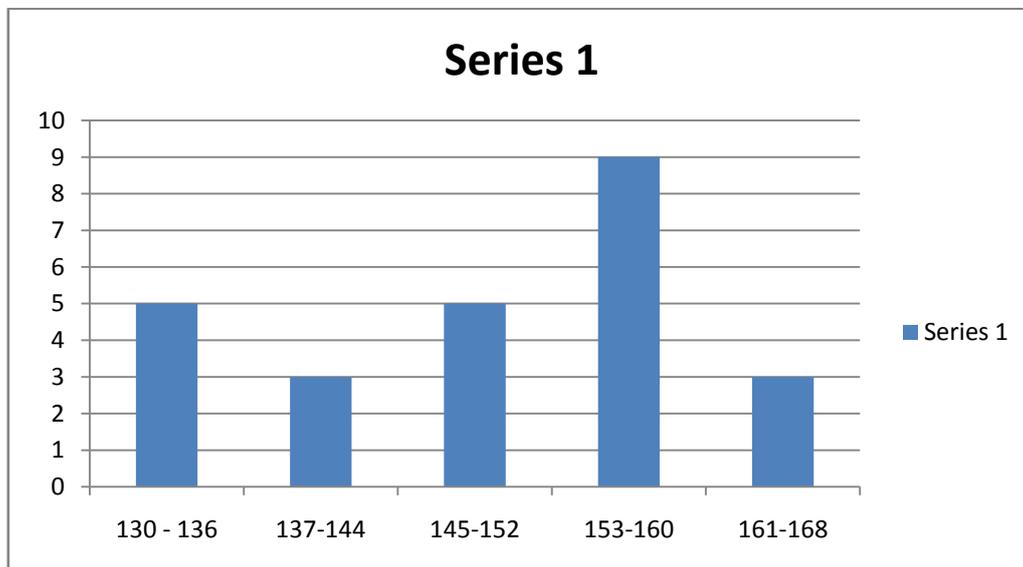

Figure 3: Principals' attitudes

Teachers' attitudes

Figure 4 presents Wonogiri primary school teachers' toward inclusion.
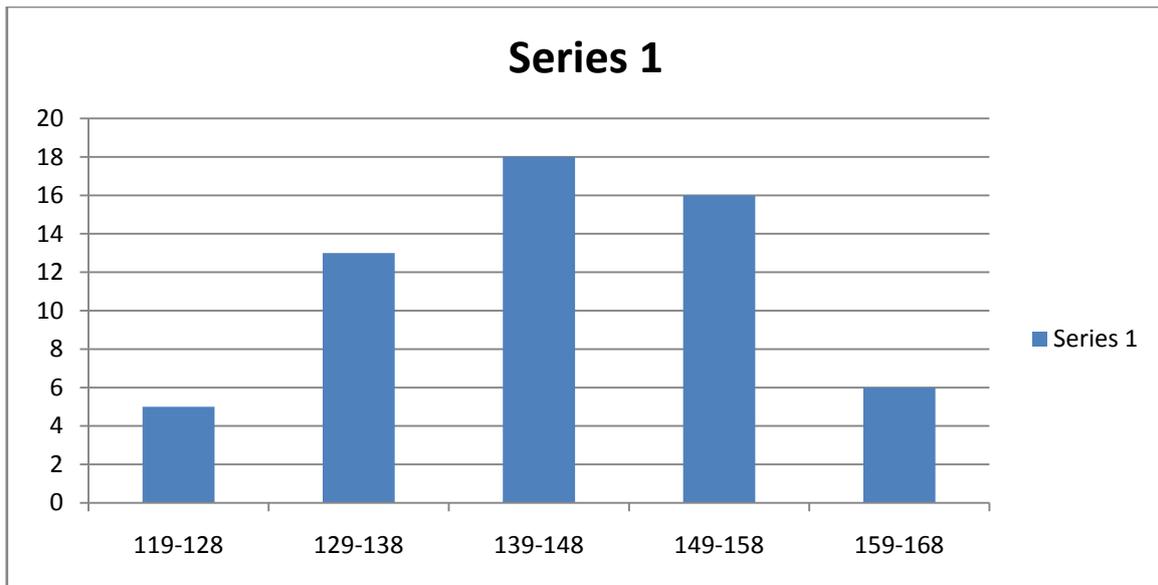
Figure 4: <u>Teachers' attutides toward inclusion</u>

Six repondents (12%) had scores between 159 – 168, sixteen (16%) scored between 149-158, eighteen (36%) scored between 139 – 148, another 13 (26%) had scores between 129 – 138, and five respondents (10%) scored between 119 – 128. The lowest score was 119, which belonged to the neutral category, none showed negative attitudes and more than 60% had positive attutides. Thus, teachers tended to have positive attitudes toward inclusive education.

<u>Parents' general attitudes</u>
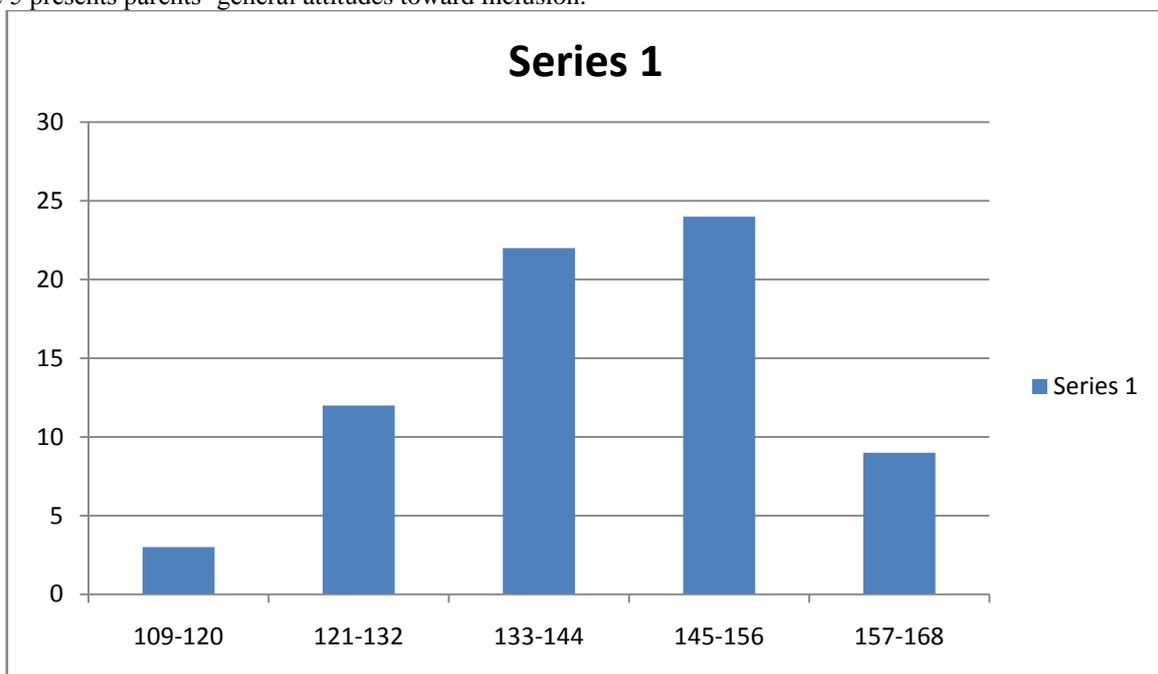Figure 5 presents parents' general attitudes toward inclusion.

Figure 5: <u>Parents' general attitudes</u>

As shown in figure 5, parents' genaral attitudes ranged from 109 to 168, indicating that they belonged to the neutral and positive categories. A number of nine respondents (12.86%) scored between 157-168, twenty four (34.29%) scored between 145-156, twenty two (31.42%) had scores between 133-144, twelve repondents (17.14%) scored between 121-132, and three (4,29%) scored between 109 – 120. A few respondents had neutral attitudes, whereas the majority showed positive attitudes toward inclusion.

<u>Attitudes of parents of normal children</u>

The attitudes of normal children's parents are presented in figure 6. Their attitudes score ranged from 116 to 170, four parents (8%) had neutral attitudes, while the rest showed positive attitudes. As shown in figure 6, four respondents (8%) had scores between 116 – 126, eleven (22%) had scores between 127-137, eighteen (36%) scored between 138-148, thirteen respondents (26%) scored between 149-159, and four (6%) had scores between 160 -170.
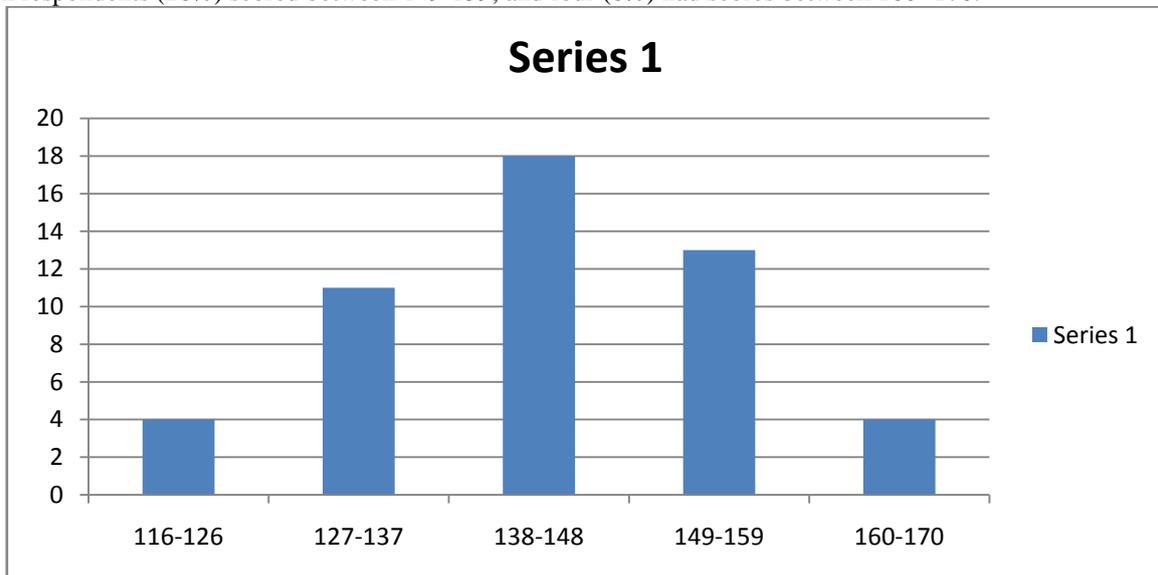

Figure 6: Attitudes of parents of normal children

Attitudes of parents of children with special needs.
Figure 7 presents the attitudes of parents of special needs children toward inclusion. It is interesting that they showed less positivetoward inclusion than parents of normal children, alghough the majority belonged to the positive category.
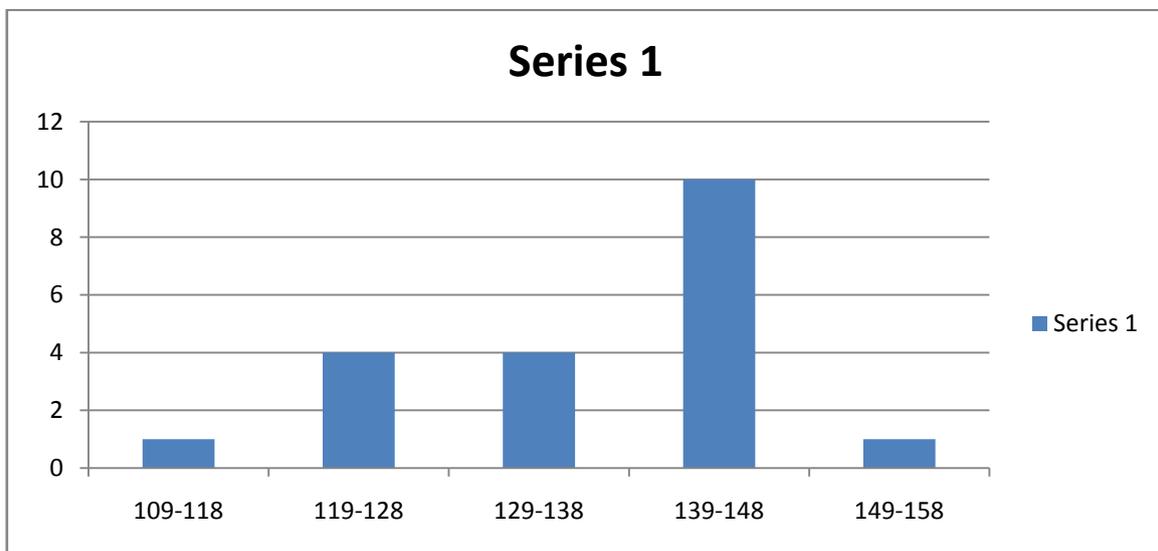

Figure 7: Attitudes of parents of special needs children.

 As shown in figure 7, their attitude scores ranged from 109 – 158. One respondent(5%) scored between 109-118, four (20%) scored between 119-128, another four (20%) had scores between 129-138, ten (50%) scored between 139-148, and one scored between 149-158.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

1. The prevalence of children with special educational needs in the District of Wonogiri was 16%, most of them had mild disabilities (learning disabled or slow learners), were already educated in regular schools. This figure (16%) is larger than the finding from a nationwide study (Sunardi et el, 2010) which showed that the prevalence of special needs children was 12% of the population. The difference is not very significant, it the respondents

could have had different perception on the definition of special needs. It might happen with the case of students with mild learning problems, some teachers think that they are not actually special needs students, because the problems can be managed by school counsellers, but others include them as special needs students.

2. Supporting facilities and access for SEN children were very limited. There were only five special schools in the large districts consisting of 25 sub-districts. Public health centers could be found in every sub-district, but these centers were minimally involved in inclusive education. This condition is very common in most parts of the country. For many decades , segregation has been the popular practice in special education. Regular schools were for 'normal' learners who could learn with standard curriculum, while learners who had difficulties with the standard curriculum must go to special schools. In this large district consisting of 25 sub-districts, there were only five special schools. Consequently, very limited supporting facilities and access are available for special needs students.

3. Regular classroom teachers had limited experience and competence working with special educational needs students. This is a rather serious problem. The process of education for special needs includes identification, programming, service provision, and evaluation, and these require specific experience and competence. There at least two alternatives, i.e. regular classroom teacher training and the employement of special education teachers in regular scools.

4. The optimistic and promising condition was that the community, principals, teachers and parents showed positive attitudes towards inclusive education. This is a very important capital. Inclusive education is expected to get support from the community with positive attitudes that they have.

5. RECOMMENDATION

1. Intensive preparation is needed to implement inclusion in the district. Serious attention needs to be given to train regular classroom teachers who still showed limited competence and to provide special supporting facilities for SEN students.

2. New special schools need to be opened. It will be complicated to implement inclusive education without such supporting resources as special schools.

3. Workshops and in service training in inclusive education are required to improve teachers' competence working with SEN students.

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