Support of Family Economic Status for Fulfilling the Right to Education for Children with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the right to education is essential for all groups, including children with disabilities. Therefore, this research was conducted to analyze the relationship between family economic support and the family’s ability to fulfill the educational rights of children with disabilities. Research on disability enhances knowledge in special education and inclusive practices, refining teaching methods and support systems additionally, understanding the vital role of families to advocate for their children’s educational rights. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The informant who participated in this study was one of the special school teachers in Yogyakarta who was selected by purposive sampling and had voluntarily agreed to become an informant. Data was collected through structured in-depth interviews and documentation and analyzed inductively. The study results show that family economic support is not the main obstacle in realizing the right to education for children with disabilities. A more significant obstacle that arises in realizing the rights of children with disabilities is parents’ perception in educating their children whether they attend school or not. The results of this study indicate that parents must realize that the right to education must be given to all children, including children with disabilities. Apart from special education, inclusive education must also be widely promoted to increase awareness and the responsibility of parents or families toward their children’s right to education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every human being is born with different physical and psychological conditions (M. M. Umam & Arifin, 2020). Some people consider this condition an abnormality, but most others call it a disability. Persons with disabilities are defined as people who have limitations so that they encounter obstacles and difficulties in life because of the deficiencies they have experienced in life for a long time that the surrounding environment cannot provide access, both in physical and social environments (Farakhiyah et al., 2018). Children with disabilities have limitations such as physical, intellectual, mental, emotional, speech, sight, hearing, and special talents (Anggraeni & Sukmono, 2019). Nonetheless, every citizen has the same rights, one of which is the right to education.

Children’s rights, including the right to education, must be realized by parents, families, communities, and the state (Prasetia, 2019). Every child has the same rights, including children with disabilities. The right to education is very influential for children’s growth, so the right to education must be fulfilled (Husna et al., 2019). In practice, however, children with disabilities are often bullied, and some people think that they need


’an affordable special school as many families with disabilities come from a lower middle-class economy (Firmansyah et al., 2021). By realizing the right to education for persons with disabilities, they will have the opportunity to develop their interests and talents to improve their standard of living and change their social status (Al Faiq, 2022). Public awareness of disability is still lacking. Negative stigma, isolation, overprotection, loss of the role and treatment of families and communities on disability issues, and the lack of realization of disability rights in all areas of people’s lives are quite strong. There are still many persons with disabilities who live below the poverty line, have low education, and many families of persons with disabilities hide or cover up if they have members with disabilities in their families, as well as the government’s role has not been maximized (Mubin & Rozi, n.d.).

The responsibility for caring for a child with a disability lies not only with the child’s parents but also within the immediate family and society. The physical and psychological conditions of children with disabilities make them vulnerable to unpleasant treatment, such as ridicule, exclusion, and bullying. Parents have many roles in educating children, namely providing primary education, attitudes, character, and basic skills such as religion, character, courtesy, aesthetics, affection, a sense of security, imparting good habits, and discipline (Sandy, 2018). Parents have a complex role, so parents of children with disabilities need support from their surroundings. Ideally, society should become a resource system for parents to more easily face challenges in realizing the rights of children with disabilities (Yaqien et al., 2018).

Talking about parents and family members who should be a support system for persons with disabilities, the fact is that there are still many families who are not ready to accept family members with disabilities socially and psychologically. For this reason, parents need to provide understanding to the extended family, especially the surrounding environment, regarding the needs and privileges of persons with disabilities (Saputri et al., 2019). Waruwu & Adhi (2019) stated that the problems faced by children with disabilities and their parents in Indonesia are exclusion and stigma. Instead of getting attention or help from the surrounding community, they are often ostracized. Moreover, children with disabilities experience violence or intimidation in their environment. This is in accordance with (Azzahra, 2020) that children with disabilities and their families are often marginalized and separated from their communities in terms of enjoyment, education, and opportunities compared to children in general.

Persons with disabilities sometimes face unfavorable views in society, such as research conducted by R. N. Umam (2021) that the negative interpretations of persons with disabilities often lead to exclusion in social life. This exception is due to the outlook of significant physical conditions between people with disabilities and ‘healthy bodies’. This stigma is usually in the form of gossip, insults, and even physical action. In society, the condition of persons with disabilities is difficult to accept because of their view that the presence of persons with disabilities is seen as unpleasant to look at and considered detrimental in society, so their presence is avoided as much as possible (Kurnia & Apsari, 2020).

Discriminatory behavior and violence are also very risky for children with disabilities. Limited family knowledge about handling family members with disabilities also contributes to the acceptance of behaviors such as sexual violence by persons with disabilities (Karim, 2018). The family plays a significant role in the immediate environment regarding the survival of family members with disabilities (Mutia, 2019). As the child’s closest environment, the family plays a vital role in monitoring and supporting the growth and development of children with disabilities (Tanaya et al., 2023). According to research conducted by Muthmainah (2022) family support helps children cope and adapt to living a life that is not always easy. Through the support provided, the family becomes the support and motivation for the child to survive. Uswatun Khasanah & Pratisti (2022) also conducted similar research, and the results showed that there was an influence of social support on children with disabilities, forms of social support channeled through emotions, tools as well as information. Another study conducted by Dahan & Anggoro (2021) stated that apart from support from the family, the state’s approach as a policymaker on these issues must include realizing the constitutional rights of persons with disabilities through policies in all areas of life. National policies to realize the rights of persons with disabilities, especially in the economic rights (Widjaja et al., 2020).

In terms of policy, the government has actually provided opportunities for persons with disabilities to work in the government sector. The Indonesian Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities Article 53 Paragraph (1) states that: The Government, Regional Government, State-Owned Enterprises and Regional-Owned Enterprises are required to employ at least 2% (two percent) of persons with disabilities from the total number of employees or workers. In Paragraph (2), it states that private companies are required to employ at least 1% (one percent) of persons with disabilities from the number of employees or workers. Unfortunately, this policy has not been fully implemented in the field (Widjaja et al., 2020). Incomplete protection of the economic rights of persons with disabilities also impacts the right to education.

Persons with disabilities are often marginalized socially and economically. The differences in public services that should be obtained are equal, sometimes different, such as in education. This form of exclusion directly impacts aspects of education and health, as well as the job vacancies they can get. Because it is difficult
to get an adequate education, it is common for parents not to send children with disabilities to school because of economic barriers or the unavailability of schools for persons with disabilities in the surrounding areas. Globally, persons with disabilities are very vulnerable to poverty due to limited access to education. This limited access to education means that many people with disabilities do not have access to the highest education possible, like people without disabilities.

Research on the relationship between disability and poverty is still increasing. The World Health Organization (WHO) study shows a strong correlation between disability and poverty level, so these two variables can have an impact that can be said to be a “vicious circle.” Lack of information and communication certainly affects the social and economic conditions of persons with disabilities; they do not have access to social networks, which are very important for entering the world of work (Gufron & Rahman, 2020). The existing research on the relationship between disability and education is extensive, but there is a gap in the specific exploration of economic factors. This research seeks to reveal the extent of a family's economic status in supporting fulfilling the right to education for children with disabilities. This research seeks to reveal the extent of a family’s economic status in supporting fulfilling the right to education for children with disabilities.

2. METHOD

A qualitative descriptive was used to describe events or incidents concerning fulfilling the right to education for children with disabilities, influenced by the family’s economic status. Primary and secondary data sources are included in this study. The primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with one teacher from Anugerah Special School and by observations of the students with disabilities, the school’s social and physical environment, and the learning process led by the informant. The informant selection method was carried out purposively by considering certain factors in the sampling (Imron, 2019). In this study, sampling was carried out by considering that information could be obtained about family economic support for realizing the right to education for persons with disabilities, depending on the subject sought (Maulida et al., 2023). Secondary data sources used in this research are books and journals related to disability poverty, government programs related to education, and other articles relevant to the research.

The interview was conducted using a semi-structured method, only the topics were prepared, and the questions were asked spontaneously during the interview so that scientific questions were not asked precisely as prepared because some general questions were designed to get answers covering the topic broadly. This interview was used to collect information about the financial status of students with disabilities at Anugerah Special School. Interviews were conducted with one class teacher who teaches blind and deaf students. The interview was conducted for approximately 60 minutes.

Data from the interviews and observations were analyzed inductively. Through the description of the data obtained, then using an effective way of thinking to analyze the role of family economic support in realizing the education of children with disabilities. Data analysis in this study used interactive analysis techniques proposed by Huberman (2014), which included (1) data acquisition, (2) data reduction, (3) data presentation, and (4) drawing conclusions and validation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis generated four themes, namely (1) the ability of parenting styles to fulfill children’s right to education, (2) government support for fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities, (3) family economic support for fulfilling children’s rights, and (4) school efforts to provide inclusive education for middle and lower economy class families. These themes will be discussed in detail in the following descriptions.

3.1. The ability of parenting styles to fulfill children’s right to education

The findings show that the parenting skills of students in special schools are still low due to a lack of information and knowledge about handling disabilities in most communities, which creates confusion in caring for children with special needs. Caring for children becomes complicated when meeting the needs of children with disabilities. Fulfillment of these needs depends on the ability of parents to manage and guide their children with special needs and disabilities. Of course, caring for children with special needs is different from caring for children without distractions, which can sometimes cause confusion and difficulties for parents and even be overwhelmed (Nurasa & Mareti, 2022).

During data collection, it was indicated that the lack of knowledge about caring for children with disabilities was also one of the factors that hindered the process of caring for children with disabilities. The problems that researchers found in the field were caused by a lack of information and expertise in disability management for parents of children with disabilities (M. M. Umam & Arifin, 2020). The understanding that education for persons with disabilities has the right to receive the same treatment in education as other children proves that the status of persons with disabilities is that of a socially marginalized group, which is reflected in the system of special education and inclusive education. However, this does not rule out the possibility of changing a flexible education system for persons with disabilities. The importance of the right to education for
persons with disabilities is an effort to eradicate discrimination, education makes them have values that are acceptable in the future and can interact and participate directly (Arrivanissa, 2023). Having the right to education in special schools can improve the standard of living of persons with disabilities.

The contribution of special schools to education will be no greater than that of homes. This is because special schools are only able to provide services to children with disabilities while at school, which means that the time to provide services or advice is quite limited. After that, children with disabilities do more activities at home than at school. This causes that the child’s growth in learning and carrying out skill activities is more effective to do at home. Therefore, the condition of the family environment is very influential in educating children with disabilities.

Parenting styles greatly determine the potential growth and development of children with disabilities. Good parenting will provide a character that can support the growth and development of children through small activities that can be carried out at home (Novita & Yuliani, 2021). According to the information provided by the informant in the interview:

“Every child has the same rights in education, including children with disabilities. However, even though they already have the right to get an education, the decision to go to school to get a good education and service remains with the family, so not all parents want their children to go to school, some want their children to be treated only for therapy.”

Research Hästbacka et al. (2016) states that in society, people with disabilities are considered to have no skills at work, and in fact, employment opportunities for people with disabilities are also very limited. This causes people’s mindset about the physical condition that children with disabilities who lack self-confidence are often embarrassed and worried, so they prefer not to give access to their children outside the house (Jarmitia et al., 2016). With this statement, parental support is essential in fulfilling the educational rights of children with disabilities.

3.2. Government support for fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities

The findings verify how the government’s efforts to provide educational support for persons with disabilities by providing inclusive education through general schools from an early age aim to fulfill the right to education for persons with disabilities. Inclusive education from an early age can maximize the growth of children’s potential intelligence and special talents. The government also provides scholarships to several schools to help with school fees for children, such as Hope Family Program (PKH) and Smart Indonesia Program (PIP). These programs can overcome the economic problems of lower-middle-class families with difficulty meeting their children’s school fees (Putra et al., 2021). With this government support, the fulfillment of children’s right to education can only be maximized with the motivation and willingness of parents to educate their children to pursue a better level of education. The ability of parents to educate their children is very influential in fulfilling their children’s right to education, families with middle to lower economic levels tend to prioritize housing or living needs rather than meeting the educational needs of children who are not yet guaranteed to get a more decent job in the future. This kind of thinking is often encountered by several researchers, such as research conducted by Zhan et al. (2021) that there are still many people who are worried about sending their children to school.

Special school Anugerah experienced several inhibiting factors; the first is the amount of funds that has been determined by the agency so that use is limited, the tenure teachers are limited, and the teacher’s salary is sometimes insufficient. Constraints come from the students themselves because each student has different characters and features, so the services are also different and require different media and rooms, even though the privileges are the same, sometimes children still cannot be in one classroom based on cognitive abilities or conditions. The family is also a significant factor in fulfilling the education of children with disabilities, without awareness of what children need, it will be difficult for them to get facilities.

To carry out education for children with disabilities, it is necessary to have support facilities designed in such a way as to be accessible. Based on the observations, the school provides facilities in the form of special media that can be accessed by persons with disabilities, such as talking computers used for the blind. In line with previous research conducted by Andyani & Soetjiningsih (2021), research shows that technology can be of great benefit to persons with disabilities in educational settings. Alternative input devices, such as adaptive keyboards and speech recognition systems, have proven very effective for students with physical disabilities. In addition, communication technology can help students with mild learning disabilities communicate in different ways. It is important for policy decisions to prioritize placing students with disabilities in the least restrictive environments and that appropriate technology systems are linked to students’ needs and abilities. In addition, informants revealed that “schools provide various social media platforms for students to access information related to learning, such as WhatsApp Groups, Google Classrooms, Instagram.” In accordance with research conducted by Novita & Yuliani (2021), electronic devices are very important for children with disabilities. This is because technology is growing, learning in schools also uses applications that make it easier.

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for teachers to deliver material, and children with disabilities also have skills in using electronic devices to keep up with technological developments. However, the use of electronic devices outside of school must be directly supervised by parents so that they are not used incorrectly. As informant said in the interview:

“There are several obstacles in the learning process, … not all children with disabilities can use gadgets so that information is not conveyed optimally. However, not all students can use gadgets so that information can only be obtained through family or teacher intermediaries. Learning is carried out using media that are adapted to the needs of children, such as Braille books for the blind, sign language dictionaries for the Deaf as well as through audio-visual and psychomotor intermediaries for material provided through singing, dancing assisted by platforms such as YouTube.”

This finding contradicts the study conducted by Shaleh (2018). However, sometimes there are many changes, and people are more ashamed to have children with disabilities and choose to hide them. As a result, the rights of persons with disabilities are severely restricted. Over time, people are increasingly aware of the importance of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, the facilities provided still face many obstacles in realizing the rights of persons with disabilities, and the active involvement of the government and society is still needed to ensure that persons with disabilities have the same rights as the general public.

3.3. Family economic support for fulfilling children’s rights

The study results demonstrated that most students in this special school investigated have middle to lower family economic levels. Families with these conditions find it difficult to meet their daily needs, so the parents’ jobs are not permanent and not feasible, causing little income. As a result, parents have difficulty providing inclusive education because of the budgeting factor. Other problems also come from the non-fulfillment of adequate health services, precisely due to cost factors, such as therapy, medicines, and vitamins, not all of which can be obtained freely. These economic problems cause children with disabilities to stunt their growth so that children with disabilities decrease in terms of health and development, and patterns of thinking because their bodies are unable to pursue education so that children with disabilities will find it challenging to develop their potential due to lack of support from parents and facilities. Even though schools provide scholarships, if the condition of persons with disabilities is severe, the school cannot accept them because it will be challenging to learn (Tugiah & Trisoni, 2022).

Families of persons with disabilities often have difficulty finding work, resulting in low income. Families with high incomes may not be burdened with the needs of their children with disabilities, where the needs of children with disabilities are greater than those of normal children. In contrast, families who have a financial burden because they have children with disabilities where parents will feel worried and anxious about the increased expenses. Psychological pressure experienced by parents, especially mothers, will be at risk of experiencing parenting stress which interferes with interactions between mothers and children (Amalia et al., 2022). The needs of families who have family members with disabilities are more than families whose members are without disabilities (Ómarsdóttir et al., 2022). Families with low incomes have difficulty accessing health services, transportation, and the needs of children with disabilities are unmet. Parents with low incomes will worry about the costs they have to pay for basic daily needs and the needs of children with disabilities who require higher costs such as medicines, therapy, and disability aids (Arianto & Apsari, 2022).

Research conducted by Limbong & Rosdianti (2022) highlights the significant impact of disability on the family economy and poverty, particularly in the context of education. Disability costs are often not considered in determining the poverty line, resulting in lower poverty rates. Children with disabilities may also receive less than their share of family resources, affecting their well-being. Disability is closely related to poverty, and reducing poverty is a key economic development goal. Inclusive education can significantly reduce the costs of exclusion for both individuals and society at large, contributing to economic growth and reducing dependence on social protection schemes. Prevention of disability-related disorders, such as improving maternal health and nutrition, is also important for reducing the financial costs of exclusion. Overall, inclusion should be central to reducing the costs of exclusion for children with disabilities and their families.

In the research that has also been carried out by Boekosoe (2018) explains that family economic conditions affect a person’s status in the social order, this determination is indirectly accompanied by a set of rights as well as obligations related to existing status. The researcher also explained that the economic conditions of the family play a major role in the psychological and psychological development of children. The study findings indicate that there is a significant influence regarding the link between economic conditions on the quality of education of children with disabilities. So that the family economy is quite influential in fulfilling the right to education for persons with disabilities. With an adequate economy, persons with disabilities will have their right to education fulfilled with various facilities to support children’s growth and development. On the other hand, the economic level of middle to lower families causes a lot of problems so that children with
disabilities are unable to fulfill their right to education. Even though the right to education is very important and must be fulfilled for all children.

3.4. School efforts in organizing inclusive education for lower-middle-class families

The informant in this study revealed that school has tried to fully support students with disabilities, especially when they come from lower-middle-class families. The informant added that those students with disabilities tended to have big effort to learn. For example, they want to do the assignments the teacher gave but still need guidance. Students also pay attention to what their teacher tells them to do; sometimes, they are also not afraid to ask using sign language when they don’t understand the task given. The teacher mostly teaches singing, dancing, drawing, and other skills according to their potential and hobbies. The informant explained:

“Not a few of them participated in competitions and won championships. Take a look on the wall, there are certificates from those who have won the competition. That means, actually, they are able to show their talent as long as they are given the opportunity and practice.”

Observations made were the same as the explanation from the informant that: achievement was not determined based on level because students’ abilities were different, and learning was determined according to students’ interests and talents. In addition, several obstacles arise, including: the difficulty of preparing students to learn because of the different characteristics of students, the difficulty of inviting students to learn, and learning must follow the mood of students, teachers in this special school are not according to the subject matter but homeroom teachers. In this case, Anugerah Special School is very helpful for the educational development of persons with disabilities, but many parents disagree if their children are considered different. The informant added:

“There are still many parents who send their children with disabilities to regular schools because they don’t want their children to go to special schools, the community and some parents have negative views about special schools, so they don’t want their children to go to them. In fact, children with disabilities who attend regular schools without a special or inclusive education system will actually experience difficulties, and it will be worse if they become targets of bullying from other children because they are a minority and are considered weak.”

Most families with disabilities are at a low economic level with a low level of education, resulting in low knowledge about persons with disabilities and considering them a disgrace that needs to be hidden from the public (Budiarto et al., 2021). The findings of this study confirm that the economic factor that has become an obstacle is the cost. This special school accepts all students and those who cannot afford to be able to attend this school by providing free school fees. The teachers also help students to get scholarships from institutions or private organizations. Differences in the economic background of each student are not a factor in their achievement; all have the same opportunity to develop their potential in various fields such as sports, art, fashion, and others. The Education and Culture Office holds routine programs to provide facilities that support students’ needs so that there are no economic disparities in schools.

4. CONCLUSION

The study results indicate that the family’s economic background is not a reason for children with disabilities not to have the right to education. Special School Anugerah provides many assistances, such as scholarships and flexibility in committee contributions. Therefore, parents need to be more aware of the needs of children with disabilities in fulfilling their right to education because, basically, the facilities provided for public and special schools are different. Teachers should further develop students’ talents so that they can guide their abilities and enjoy learning. For future researchers, it is necessary to study more profoundly economic behavior and the ability of parents to fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities. Further research needs to be investigated to direct the development and construction of new schools, hoping that the government should oversee every construction of new school buildings or other school facilities so that they are designed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. The study was limited to one special school, so the findings may not be generalizable to all special schools, also limited by the time constraints, which prevented the researchers from collecting data from a larger sample size, So for future researchers should conduct larger studies that include participants from a variety of special schools.
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