CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter outlines and reviews different issues pertinent to the study. It was organized thematically and chronologically in the light of the issues under discussion. The review provides historical, theoretical and research based findings to substantiate the raised research questions and objectives of the study. Various sources from different authors and researchers including pertinent documents were incorporated in the chapter to exhaust ideas and give theoretical framework to the study. In the light of this the concepts of inclusion, disability and visual impairment are defined in wider contexts. The historical emergence of inclusive education is presented as a highlight, including the rationale for inclusion and its implementation in addressing the needs of disabled students in general and VISs in particular. A special focus was also given to elaborate factors which make inclusive education successful.

3.1. Inclusive education

3.1.1. What is inclusion/ inclusive education?

The question of inclusive education has attracted much attention all over the world. Nevertheless, an examination of literature and practice shows that there is no agreed upon universal definition. The term has come to mean different things to different people since it is context specific. The concept also varies from country to country and is associated with various perspectives which indicate the concern of each country.

According to Pijl, Mijer and Hegarty(1997:106-107), inclusion has different meanings for different people. Referring to American experience they state that:
Inclusion certainly means ‘place’, a classroom in a regular school building, and a seat in an age-appropriate general education classroom. It also means access to, and participation in, the general education instructional programme, either full-time or part-time. And it means bringing special education teachers or special education paraprofessionals into general education schools and classrooms to help make inclusion work. Beyond this broad conceptualization, however, inclusion can mean very different things in different schools and among different professionals.

They also added that “Inclusion will mean a change in the school climate; it is a statement that a diverse set of learners are not only welcome in the school but will also be accommodated by their teachers.” (p. 108)

As Dyson and Millward (2000: 15-16) stated, the concept of inclusion in England can be seen as involving one or more of a whole range of levels:

- An inclusive national system – in which all learners are offered a comparable education, albeit in different types of schools,
- An inclusive locality- in which a particular community educates all its own children, though it may do so in different types of schools,
- An inclusive classroom – in which all learners are educated together, regardless of characteristics and ‘needs’,
- An inclusive curriculum – whereby all learners follow the same broad program, though they may do so in different classrooms or schools,
- Inclusive learning experience – in which learners with different characteristics work collaboratively and learn together, or
• Inclusive outcomes – whereby all students achieve high outcome levels, or have enhanced life chances, or are enabled to participate in an inclusive society once their formal education is complete.

In another context, according to Jha(2002) cited in Singal(2005: 344) inclusive education can also be understood involving ‘all’ children results in conceptualization of inclusion at three levels:

1. The focus is on inclusion of children with disabilities.

2. There is the inclusion of children belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged groups, who are either not coming to school or who drop out after a few years.

3. It is important to include children who are in the classroom but feel alienated due to non-relevant curriculum and teacher-centre pedagogy.

In Spain, as in UK, there is acceptance of the new terminology of ‘children with special education needs’ rather than children with disabilities or handicaps. This concept “is linked to certain kinds of pedagogic help or services required to achieve the educational aims: that is, an educational need is described in terms of what is essential for the pupil to achieve certain educational objectives.” Mittler and Daunt (1995: 13).

The literature on inclusive education in India primarily addresses “concerns about the children with disabilities.”(Singal, 2005: 335). This is illustrated in the definition given by Chadha(2000) as quoted in Singal (Ibid). Chadha defines inclusion as “providing to all children (irrespective of the kind and degree of disability) equitable opportunities, to
receive effective educational services with needed supplementary aids and support services in age appropriate classes in their neighborhood schools.”

In the, ‘Guidelines for Inclusion’ UNESCO (2005:13) defines inclusion as a process by referring to various aspects, which incorporate its essence as clearly seen in the following:

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.

It also “aims to enable both teachers and learners to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment in the learning environment, rather than a problem.’’ (UNESCO, 2003:7)

Inclusive education is also a new way of thinking which embraces various implications. According to UNESCO (2001: 31) inclusive education:

a) acknowledges that all children can learn and that all need some form of support in learning;

b) aims to uncover and minimize barriers to learning;

c) is broader than formal schooling and includes the home, the community and other opportunities for education outside of schools;
d) is about changing attitudes, behaviors, teaching methods, curricula and environments to meet the needs of all children;

e) is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving according to local cultures and contexts and is part of the wider strategy to promote an inclusive society.

In another context inclusive education is sometimes seen as a” political strategy based on human rights and democratic principles, that confronts all forms of discriminations, as part of a concern to develop an inclusive society and to ensure that some students receive additional resources and are not ignored or neglected.” (UNESCO, 1998: 25)

It can also been seen from educational point of view as defined by Piji, Meiger and Hegarty (1997: 150-151) in the following:

Inclusion is sometimes defined as the provision of appropriate high quality education for pupils with special needs in regular schools. Whether or not this happens depends critically on teacher variables, specifically their willingness to take on this task and their ability to carry it out. …Inclusion stands for an educational system that encompasses a wide range diversity of pupils and that differentiates education in response to their diversity.

According to Rieser(2008:23) the index for inclusion defines inclusion as having various components. Some of these are:

Valuing all students and staff equally; increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, the curricula and communities of local schools; reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorized as having special educational needs; viewing differences
among students as resources that support learning; rather than as a problem to be overcome; acknowledging the right of students to receive an education in their locality; and so on.

Realizing all these variations of definitions, it would be possible to synthesis that there is no agreed upon single definition to the concept of inclusion. It could be conceptualized from various perspectives which have got prominence in the direction to which it addresses and is applied.

In relation to this, Daniels and Garner (1999) as quoted by Dyson and Millward (2000:4), come to the conclusion that, “Although it is possible to agree across national boundaries what inclusion means in general terms, the reality in each national system will be determined by the history, culture and politics of those systems.”

Inclusive education can also be characterized by taking its inherent features. For example, ‘The Guidelines for Inclusion’ (UNESCO, 2005), extended the idea that the concept of inclusion could be labeled using the following four key elements:
The essence of the diagram implies that inclusion as a process is a “never-ending search” which allows investigating ways of responding to diversity. It is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers based on collecting and evaluating information in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. There is also a need to understand that inclusion requires not only physical presence but also active participation and achievement of all children; and gives special emphasis on children who are “at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement” (UNESCO, 2005:15).

In this sense, an inclusive approach requires an educational philosophy that is committed to the improvement of instructional strategies, school programmes and the most effective and equitable use of available resources (Pijl, Mijer and Hegarty, 1997: 71).

In this case the fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that:

All children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school. (UNESCO, 1994) cited in Birhanu (2011: 7).

In connection with this Tod and Ellis in Arthur, Grainger and Wray (2006: 282-283.) dealing with the topic ‘Inclusive Approaches’ stated also the following principles of an inclusive education service:
• Inclusion is a process by which schools, local education authorities and others develop their cultures, policies and practices to include pupils.
• With the right training, strategies and support nearly all children with special educational needs can be successfully included in mainstream education.
• An inclusive education service offers excellence and choice and incorporates the views of parents and children,
• The interests of all pupils must be safeguarded.
• Schools, local education authorities and others should actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation.
• All children should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential.

According to Walker and Covington (1998:2) inclusive education for all students “should utilize the best teaching techniques, and any necessary support services and supplementary aids available to make the process of learning a success. Services are brought to the students instead of students being removed from the general classroom to receive the services.’’

In the context of addressing the needs of visually impaired learners the concept of inclusive education implies that visually impaired learners in the same class would be taught and examined in the same language structure in order to be able to sit for a similar examination that would be marked and graded similarly (Wamae and Rschael, 2004).
3.1.2. Historical Perspectives

Related to the conception and realization of inclusive education, a substantial volume of literature has been generated as a document. According to Barton (2003) the question of inclusive education or its realization is shaped by historical, cultural, global and contextual factors.

The term inclusion seems to have its origins in the USA in the late 1980s and which grew in the strength during the early 1990s (Fuchs (1994); Skrtic(1995)cited in Dyson and Millward (2000).

In the 1990s the concept of placing students with special needs in the general education classes began to be known as inclusion. The guiding principle behind inclusion is to bring the services to the student, rather than the student to the services (Wood, 1992).

Historically the inclusive school movement, in Scandinavian Countries, grew out of a parent-initiated effort that focused on the rights of the children with disabilities to participate with their nondisabled peers (Turnbull and Turnbull, 2001) in Soodak (2003: 328).

Parents believed and educators supported the notion, that separating children on any characteristic, such as ability or race, inherently leads to an inferior education for those who are “tracked” out of the mainstream.

Moreover, in the ‘Guidelines for Inclusion’ UNESCO(2005:9), it is mentioned that “Inclusion originally derived from Special Education in which its development involved a series of stages during which education systems have explored different ways of
responding to children with disabilities, and to students who experience difficulties in learning.”

Inclusion was also framed within the context of the wider international discussions around “the United Nations Organizations’ agenda of ‘Education for All (EFA)’ stimulated by the 1990 Jomiton Declaration.” (UNESCO, 2005: 9)

The Salamanca World Statement also played a great role to the realization need for inclusive education as supported by 92 governments. This statement, besides providing a framework for thinking about how to move policy and practice forward, argues that the regular schools with an inclusive orientation are “… the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.” (UNESCO, 2005: 9).

As a historical development the trend at present is to create one education system that values all children and devise a classroom that welcomes all children irrespective of disability and other variations.

According to Mangal (2007:550) the historical development of inclusive education has gone through a long process which is divided into some specific periods or eras like the following:

The era of exclusion--Extermination and abandonment

The disabled children were treated as a useless burden on the society with the theoretical principle of “survival of the fittest.” As a result of this, people with disability were either killed or used as objects of entertainment.
The era of acceptance as a subject of amusement and use

This was based on exploitation of the disabled children serving as commodities, i.e., as beggars, prostitutes or slaves.

The era of prohibition, legal discrimination and witchcraft

The disabled were labeled impure deprived of their right of inheritance, and prohibited from any role of social life.

The era of sympathy and asylum- institutionalization

Some efforts were made to provide the disabled children protection and asylum which led to establishing institutions where they were fed and closed including treating in mental hospitals.

The era of isolated settings--special schools

Due to Renaissance movement new ideas emerged in the direction of special education for the disabled population such as special education for deaf, special education for blind, and special education for mentally retarded.

In connection with this Kisanji(1999,6), referring to various sources listed below, states that the creation of special education resulted in several educational problems. These are:

1. Children who qualify for special education have something wrong with them that make it difficult for them to participate in the regular school curriculum; they thus receive a curriculum that is different from that of their peers.

2. Children with disabilities and other conditions are labeled and excluded from the mainstream of society. Assessment procedures tend to categorize students and this has damaging effects on teacher and parent expectations and on the students' self-

3. Unfair methods of identification and assessment have led to a disproportionate number of students from ethnic minority groups. For example, in both Europe and North America black, Asian and Latino-American students are overrepresented in special schools and programmes; thus special education is being accused of legalizing racial segregation (Jenkinson, 1997; Wang et al., 1990).

4. The presence of specialists in special education encourages regular classroom teachers to pass on to others responsibility for children they regard as special (Ainscow, 1991).

5. Resources that might otherwise be used to provide more flexible and responsive forms of schooling are channeled into separate provision (Ainscow, 1991).

6. The emphasis on Individualized Educational Plans and task analysis in special education tends to lower teacher expectations of the students. In addition, task analysis and the associated behavioral teaching strategies introduce disjointed knowledge and skills thus making learning less meaningful to students (Sebba, Byers and Rose, 1993).

The era of segregated settings –special classes

This gave way to the practice of education for exceptional / disabled in the shape of moving from the isolated settings of special schools to the segregated settings of the special classes within the normal/regular classes. This entails the presence of options, i.e., establishing a number of special schools or makes an alternative arrangement in the regular school (special class).
The era of inclusive settings—regular classes

As a result of negative implications of the aforementioned eras a new wave of change emerged to avoid discrimination and segregations. According to World Report on Disability (2001: 3), “Responses to disability have changed since 1970s,…. Policy has now shifted towards community and educational inclusion, and medically focused solutions have given way to more interactive approaches recognizing that people are disabled by environmental factors as well as by their bodies.”

All these eras demonstrate a historical account of inclusive education and each show how disability is addressed and gives momentum to a clear insight on the question of disabilities and the decree of international conventions.

The most important impetus for realization of inclusive education was ‘fuelled’ by a number of initiatives taken by UNO and World Bank. According to Mangal (2007: 65) the following were contributory factors:

a) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949)
b) The World Conference on Education For All (1990)
c) The UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1992)
Influenced by these contributory factors, “Many countries of the world have come up with necessary legislative initiative in making inclusive education as a basic policy of their educational system” (Mangal, 2007: 66).

3.1.3. The Rationale for Inclusion

Inclusion in education is a human right. At the core of inclusive education there is human right to education which is pronounced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 which states that “Everyone has the right to education.” (UNESCO, 2005: 12)

UNESCO views inclusion as a “dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as a problem, but as opportunities for enriching learning” (UNESCO, 2005: 12). Therefore, the move towards inclusion is not simply a technical or organizational change but also a movement with clear philosophy. Inclusive education is necessitated and justified due to the following three arguments (Dark and Light Blind Care, 2008:9):

**Educational justification:** the requirement for inclusive schools to educate all children together means that they have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences and thus benefit all children.

**Social justification:** inclusive schools are able to change attitudes to differences by educating all children together and form the basis for a just and non-discriminatory society.
**Economic justification:** it is likely to be less costly to establish and maintain schools which educate all children together than to set up a complex system of different types of school specializing in different groups of children (UNESCO, 2009).

The right of education “can be realized only when schools begin to accommodate different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of children and their broader range of learning styles, behaviors, capabilities, and potential in all sensory domains” (Puri and Abraham, 2004: 12)

According to Roger, UNESCO (2005) as cited by Rieser (2008:5) “Inclusive education is much more cost effective than segregated system, not only in terms of the running costs but also the long-term costs on the society.”

Inclusive schools can provide a starting point for promoting a more inclusive society, as the Salamanca Statement Article 2 emphasizes stating that:

> Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994: ix).

The benefits of inclusion for children with disabilities are immense as stated by McGregor and Vogelsberg (1998) in Loreman, Deppleler and Harvey (1998: 11). These include:
a) Children with disabilities demonstrate high levels of social interaction with non-disabled peers in inclusive settings.

b) Social competence and communication skills of children with diverse abilities are improved in inclusive settings. This is believed to be closely associated with greater opportunities for social interaction with non-disabled peers, who act as models for children still developing age-appropriate social and communicative competencies.

c) Children with disabilities in inclusive setting often have a more rigorous educational program, resulting in improved skill acquisition and academic gains.

More specifically both learners with SNE and without SNE take advantage of inclusionary settings as stated by Ryndak and Alper (1996) cited in Marg (2006: 12). Hence, the following could be taken to illustrate this.

1. The benefits of inclusion for students with SNE are:
   a) Spending the school day alongside classmates who do not have disabilities provides many opportunities for social interaction that would not be available in segregated settings.
   b) Children with SNE have appropriate models of behaviour. They can observe and imitate the socially acceptable behaviour of the students without SEN.
   c) Teachers often develop higher standards of performance for students with SNE.
   d) Both general and special educators in inclusive settings expect appropriate conduct from all students.
e) Students with SNE are taught age-appropriate, functional components of academic content, which may never be part of the curriculum in segregated settings (for example, the sciences and social studies).

f) Attending inclusive schools increases the probability that students with SEN will continue to participate in a variety of integrated settings throughout their lives.

2. The benefits of inclusion for students without SNE are:

a) Students without SNE have a variety of opportunities for interacting with peers of their own age who experience SNE in inclusive school settings.

b) They may serve as peer tutors during instructional activities.

c) They may play the role of a special “buddy” for the children with SNE during lunch, in the bus, or on the playground.

d) Children without SNE can learn a good deal about tolerance, individual difference, and human exceptionality by interacting with those with SNE.

e) Children without SNE can learn that students with SNE have many positive characteristics and abilities.

f) Children without SNE have the chance to learn about many of the human service professions, such as, special education, speech therapy, physical therapy, recreational therapy, and vocational rehabilitation. For some, exposure to these areas may lead to their making a career in any of these areas later on.

g) Inclusion offers the opportunity for students without SNE to learn to communicate, and deal effectively with a wide range of individuals. This also prepares them to fully participate in a pluralistic society when they are adults.
Furthermore, advocates claim many benefits for the special education students. They benefit academically and from daily interaction with general education students. A more diverse curriculum is likely to be offered in a general educational setting. In an inclusionary setting, special education students learn social skills and independence.

Benefits of inclusion for the general education include: a curriculum that is more flexible and responsive to individualized needs, the presence of support services and technology, the collaboration of additional teaching experts in the classroom, and improved teaching training and teaching techniques. (Freagon, 1993, as cited by Walker and Ovington (1998:5).

All in all it would be possible to generalize that inclusive education has got a wider sphere of influence in many countries as propagated by its advocates. According to Mitchell (2008) advocates of inclusive education preferred inclusive education on the basis of three main factors.

In the first case, learners with special educational needs will gain academically and socially and will improve their self-esteem. Other learners will also gain academically, and be able to appreciate the diversity of their society with a greater recognition of social justice and equality. In the second case, in most countries it is accepted that learners with special educational needs have a right to be educated alongside with their peers who do not have special needs. The third reason is that inclusive education is cost effective in covering the expense involved in transporting and accommodating learners in special schools, especially in remote rural areas.
Irrespective of these benefits inclusive education is not far from criticism. There are controversies among professionals over the issue of special, integrated, and inclusive education. The following points could be mentioned as a doubt in the implementation of inclusion, i.e., advocates of special education argue that “Placing disabled children among normal children will lower their self-esteem and confidence. They may be stigmatized, teased and looked down by their non-disabled peers and teachers. They will need additional and specialized support to help them adapt to and learn in schools.” (UNICEF, 2003:10) On the other hand, opponents feel that “Inclusive education is unrealistic in present circumstances because of the lack of adequate support for teachers through quality pre-service and in-service education and training.” (Ibid)

3.1.4. Models of Educational Deliveries in Inclusion

In the previous sections it was stated that there are conceptual variations in stating what inclusion means. There is no also clear consensus in the field of special education about the models of inclusion to be practiced in the educational situations. Some educators are strong supporters of a full inclusive model( i.e. full time placement of all students with disabilities / exceptionalities along with non-disabled peers) the others are in favor of partial inclusion or any degree of integration into the mainstream. In this case the types or models of inclusive education may be broadly based on the full inclusive and partially inclusive nature (Mangal, 2007).

According to the research findings of Heiman( 2004) as cited in Agbenyega (2007) there are four different models of inclusion. These are: in-and-out inclusion; two teachers inclusion, full inclusion, and rejection of inclusion.
In-and-out model

In the study conducted in UK and Israel Heinman (2004) cited in Agbenyega (2007:38) found out that “this model would be more effective for the students with learning disabilities. Teachers believe that this approach would enable students with disabilities get advantage in two ways. That is, they get special instruction they needed together with regular lessons and interactions with their peers in regular settings.”

The two-teacher model

According to this model, two teachers teach simultaneously in the classroom with one of them, who has had training in special education focusing on the disabled students. In this model teachers practice team teaching in order to help students with disabilities.

Full Inclusion

This is considered to be the right model to apply within the regular classroom. It is also believed that with additional support and cooperation between teachers and with the services of the educational system full inclusion could succeed and be the most beneficial for all. But in reality it is difficult to ensure the full inclusion of all children with disabilities, even though this is the ultimate goal.

Rejection of Inclusion

Teachers in this group believe that it would be better for students with instabilities to study in separate classes and they would progress at their own pace. Teachers with this position have a fear that special needs students would never be able to reach the academic
level of the mainstream students unless they learn separately. In addition to these preferences teachers may choose to apply hybrid model such as two-teachers and in-and-out approaches depending on prevailing conditions in the process of teaching students with disabilities.

According to Tefera (2005: 6), in Ethiopia the following five modes of educational deliveries are in place for children with disabilities:

1. Special day schools (schools where children with the same type of disabilities attend during the day time),
2. Special boarding schools (residential schools where children with the same type of disabilities attend during the day time and stay the night together),
3. Special classes (classes in regular school settings where children with disabilities are placed),
4. Inclusive schools (regular schools where children with disabilities are placed fully or partially in regular classes with children without disabilities),
5. Regular schools (schools where children with undetected disabilities are attending regular classes with others).

3.1.5. Factors for Successful Inclusion

There is no ‘blueprint’ for making inclusive education successful. This entails that it is a dynamic process and basically necessary to have:

- a good knowledge and understanding of … the background to the development of inclusive education, its origins and influences
international human rights and development instruments and documents, and the concepts, models, approaches and what makes inclusive education different from apparently similar paradigms. (Stubbs, 2008: 52)

In the literature there are various factors which are considered to determine the outcome of implementation of inclusion. Among the various research findings (Alahbabi (2009), Mitchell (2008) demonstrated that there are innumerable factors which affect the implementation of inclusive education. For example, according Mitchell (2008:28) these include factors such as: “large classes, negative attitudes to disability, examination oriented education systems, a lack of support services, rigid teaching methods, assessment dominated by a medical model, a lack of parent involvement and, in some countries, a lack of clear national policies.”

In another study as refereed by Alahbabi (2009:46) the following factors such as “an appropriate process of implementation, involving other stakeholders in the implementation process, support of other staff members including special education service providers, the ability to make necessary classroom modifications, and teachers’ attitudes” were also mentioned as factors which determine the implementation of inclusive education.

In local small-scale studies conducted by Beyene and Tizazu (2010), Lakew (2001) and Tesfaye (2007) several variables such as class size, inadequate resources, lack of adapted curriculum and lack of adequate training were mentioned as factors for the success of inclusion. In a similar situation Birhanu (2011) mentioned child factors and
environmental factors that may impose challenges to the successful implementation of inclusion.

Smith, Austin, Kennedy, Lee, & Hutchison (2005) as cited in Birhanu (2011: 90) state that “Children with disabilities face constraints resulting from their own physical, emotional and cognitive limitations. These limitations or barriers reside within the individual and can be transient or permanent.” Hence, unless these constraints are understood by teachers and appropriate steps are taken, the outcome of inclusion will bring adverse effects.

The philosophy of inclusion is closely connected to human rights and equal opportunities for individuals to participate. It calls for listening to an individual's goals and needs that are impeded by a disability to engage in activities, regardless of the disability type (Wolery 2000) cited in Birhanu (2011).

A person’s environment has a huge impact on the experience and extent of disability. Inaccessible environments, in this case, create further disability by creating barriers to learner’s participation and inclusion.

Other factors which negatively affect inclusion as reported by Bradshaw and Mandia (2006:36) include “overcrowded classrooms, lack of pre-prepared teaching materials, inflexible timetable, inadequate time for planning and meeting and inadequate specialist support.”

From the overall discussion, it would be possible to understand that making inclusion successful is not an easy task. There are many internal and external factors which
interplay in the implementation and outcomes of inclusive education. Hence, successful inclusive educational practice can be achieved with policies which provide clear guidelines and a commitment to the principle of inclusion (Harvey 1998) as cited in Agbenyega (2007).

According to the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994: 21) “Changes in all the following aspects of schooling, as well as many others, are also necessary to contribute to the success of inclusive schools: curriculum, buildings, school organization, pedagogy, assessment, staffing, school ethos, and extracurricular activities.

3.1.5.1. Teachers’ Attitudes

One of the prominent environmental factors which affect the implementation of inclusion is teachers’ attitudes to disabilities and to inclusion. In the literature, Gormly (1992), Hoitocks, (1964), Magn'e (1985), Ragland & Saxon (1985), Sears, Freedman & Peplau (1985) as cited in Machi (2007: 7) the notion of attitude can be understood as an “internal state that moderates the choices of personal action made by an individual and as such it is an expression of a person's feelings about a thing or situation. This includes a total subjective sum of a person's fears, inclinations, and wishes, prejudices, preconceived notions, ideas and convictions.” Corsini (1999) as cited in Parasuram (2006:231) also defines attitude as a “learned and stable predisposition to react to a given situation, person or other set of cues in a consistent way.”
Attitudes, according to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), Triandis (1971) as cited in Boer (2011:333), are “considered to have three components: cognitive, affective and behavioural states”. In this tri-component model, cognition refers to a thought, attitude refers to a feeling, and behavior refers to an action. In this case, cognitive component represents teachers’ beliefs or knowledge about educating children with special needs in inclusive settings, reflecting teachers’ feelings about educating pupils with special needs represents affective components while teachers’ views on how to act with a child with special needs in his/her classroom reflects behavioural component.

An attitude can be positive or negative depending on the view or belief of a person. Teachers who have positive attitudes towards inclusion will have the tendency to achieve greater productivity than negative attitudes. Hence, unless teachers are positive towards inclusion, learners with special educational needs will not benefit from inclusion and they will not be motivated. This implies that inclusion will be successful when positive attitudes toward including special needs students in classrooms are expressed by teachers. In connection with this Alahababi (2009: 94) states that “Teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion more readily change and adapt the ways they work in order to benefit students with the range of learning needs.” In contrast, if teachers’ attitudes are negative, they will have an adverse effect on students with special needs and inhibit the responsibility of their success (Tefera, 1999).

Teachers’ attitudes may be influenced by their characteristics such as their educational status, teaching experience, class size, exposure to teaching of disabled students, lack of funding, workload norms, and lack of training staff in inclusive practices. In this respect,
Attitudinal barriers are perceived to be the basis of all other environmental barriers, and are the most difficult to change. They are reflected in misconceptions, stereotypes, labeling, fear from the unknown, resistance, misunderstanding people’s rights and opportunities, and further isolation of children with disabilities (Heyne, (2003), Odom (2000), Parsarum(2006)) cited in Birhanu(2011: 91).

Teachers' attitudes influence both their expectations for their students and their behavior towards them. These attitudes, expectations, and behaviors influence both student self-image and academic performance.

Previous research outcomes, in the area of inclusive education suggest that attitudes play a key role in achieving successful social interaction among teachers and students and win their attention in favor of the required educational modality. According to Padeliadu and Lampropoulou (1997), one of the major arguments that have often been used in the debate about inclusion of students with special needs has been the attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion of those with special needs. It is further pointed out that teachers’ attitudes have been considered as one of the major factors guaranteeing the success of inclusion of students with special needs.

Studies also suggested that attitudes towards inclusion are strongly influenced by the nature of the disabilities and educational problems being presented and, to a lesser extent, by the professional background.

Since teachers play a vital role in education, teachers’ attitudes are also a critical variable in predicting the success of inclusive practice (Alahababi, 2009). In this case if teachers’
attitudes are negative, they place a limitation on students with special needs and inhibit the responsibility of their success (Tefera, 1999).

The role of environmental factors, in this case, is crucial to the success of inclusive education as claimed by World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) cited in Birhanu(2011: 96) stating that “An accessible human and physical environment is necessary for furnishing equal opportunities for the participation of people with disabilities.”

According to the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education(UNESCO, 1994: 21) “Changes in all the following aspects of schooling, as well as many others, are also necessary to contribute to the success of inclusive schools: curriculum, buildings, school organization, pedagogy, assessment, staffing, school ethos, and extracurricular activities.”

**3.1.5.2. Training**

The other factor which affects the outcome of inclusive practice is teachers’ training. Inclusive program could be successfully implemented if the level of the teacher’s competency is increased. Thus, the opportunities to attend courses that are related to the inclusive education program have to be created, especially for those who lack exposure and training in special education.

In this case, “Adjustments towards the pedagogical aspects can be trained internally by experienced teachers to the new teachers. The effort towards a collaborative teaching between mainstream and special education teachers should be put in place (Disability Rights Task Force Final Report (2004) cited in Agbenyega (2007:42).
Specifically, the role of teacher training institutions is very important in this regard. Teacher training institutes should incorporate the concept of inclusion as part of the curriculum. According to Agbenyega (2007: 42) “As part of the teacher training program it is recommended that education courses make room for critical discussion regarding issues and concepts of inclusion and teaching effectiveness.” In this case, trainee teachers should be given opportunities to experience inclusive education in practice.

In connection with this, in the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (MoE, 2002) the issue of children and youth with special needs education was stressed specially. Accordingly it was planned to train teachers of special needs education (SNE) in the existing Teacher Education Institutions/Colleges and this was launched in 2006 expecting each administrative region to open SNE training program.

According to the curriculum of training English language teachers (See Appendix 8) Special Needs Education (SNE) Course Catalog for Cluster and Linear Diploma Program (Abera et al, 2008) those teachers who are trained through the linear program (grades 5-8) with diploma level, major SNE and minor English, Amharic or Local languages, Civics and Ethical Education, History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics.

In the training, trainees also take a course on Inclusive Education but only with two credit hour including the following themes: Philosophical aspects of inclusive education and inclusive life, challenges, possibilities, theoretical and practical aspects of IE, disabilities and difficulties in regular schools, fulfilling diversity need in the regular classroom,
maintaining quality and equity education, working with community and institutions, innovation and bringing positive change in the development of children with disability are focal points in the discussion.

From the overall presentations made above, it would be possible to generalize that training teachers on SNE and IE is a primary concern in the teacher education program. With this in mind, the attempt made by the government should be intensified to meet the requirements of SNE in general and IE in particular.

3.1.5.3. Inclusive Curriculum

Flexible approaches in education are needed to respond to the diverse abilities and needs of all learners. But if the curricula and teaching methods are rigid and there is a lack of appropriate teaching materials, teachers will be constrained in fulfilling their responsibility. In inclusive setting, the curriculum designed for ordinary children may be generally appropriate for visually impaired children. However, “Some adaptations to the learning materials and the teaching approaches have to be made so that the learning needs of visually impaired children can be met” (Dhawan, 2005:50).

Pijl, Meijer and Hegarty (1997:79) state that an inclusionary curriculum “provides both process and content that will facilitate students and teachers working together to achieve meaningful learning for every student.”

The curriculum should also be balanced with due attention/ consideration given to the children’s intellectual, personal, emotional and social developments. To teach visually
impaired children, the teacher should adopt a consistent, realistic and flexible approach in curriculum planning and implementation.

According to Mangal(2007:189) the curriculum adaptation for the visually impaired students essentially “requires ‘enrichment’, i.e., inclusion of various learning experiences and opportunities for the development of specific concepts and skills besides the existing core curriculum, meant for all children.”

To make inclusive education successful an inclusionary approach to curriculum is required. This means “a common curriculum for all students, which provides for multilevel instruction. Students at all levels are provided with opportunities for meaningful involvement in classroom activities. “(Position Paper National Focus Group on Education of Children with Special Needs, 2006:18).

To make inclusive teaching effective, more inclusive curricula make considerable demands on teachers. This implies that “They have to become involved in curriculum development at a local level and to be skilled in curriculum adaptation in their own classrooms.” In addition, “They have to manage a complex range of classroom activities, be skilled in planning the participation of all students and know how to support their students’ learning without giving them predetermined answers. They also have to understand how to work outside traditional subject boundaries and in culturally sensitive ways.”(UNESCO, 2003:10)
3.1.5.4. Resources

A successful inclusion of special needs pupils “depends not only on appropriate organization, legislation and regulations, but also on the availability of resources in the regular classroom and on the way teachers differentiate the resources between pupils” Pijil, Mijer and Hegarty et al. (1997:10). In this case, materials and equipments provision and financial sources are among the frontiers of challenge in the implementation of inclusive education.

Now-a-days students with visual impairments go either to regular schools or special schools for education. But wherever these children are enrolled, the crucial issue in their learning is to meet their educational needs and this requires resources. Fulfilling all the necessary resources to meet the needs of VISs in inclusive setting, especially in its infant stage, is a very challenging task.

According to Peters (2003:6), a number of cost-effective initiatives were taken by developing countries to overcome the challenge of scarce resources and to promote inclusive education. These are:

a) trainer-of-trainer models for professional development;

b) linking university in pre-service training institutions with school for their clinical experiences; and

c) converting SNE schools into resource centers to provide expertise and support to clusters of general education schools….utilizing children themselves in peer programs.
In order to make VISs’ learning effective depending on the socio-economic development of the country assistive technologies are recommended to support learners with disabilities. In this connection the use of assistive technology is highly important to support of VISs.

The term ‘assistive technology’ is now widely used to describe how educationists make use of technology, including computers, to enable the learning environment (especially including the curriculum) to be more accessible to those pupils who have SEN.(Garner, 2009)

Furthermore, assistive technology is very helpful “to support students’ engagement in regular class and access the general curriculum. Like all other children, learners who have particular SEN, including those with restricted vision, poor motor control or difficulty in reading or processing language, can benefit from using a computer and other technologies.”(Garner, 2009:87)

3.1.5.5. Assessment and Evaluation

In an outcomes-based curriculum, learners’ progress is measured against the broad results expected at the end of each learning process, such as general skills, abilities and values. It can be on-going assessment to get feedback from children’s learning and teachers’ success in selecting appropriate teaching methods, as well as the needs to adjust the pace or style of teaching. In this way, all learners can be evaluated against their own achievements instead of being compared to other learners. Assessment can take place in a flexible manner and time when the learner has acquired new knowledge, a new skill or
competency, even new attitudes and values, when the teacher has finished teaching a particular content and in the ordinary classroom situation.

It must be clear that, in the process of teaching “how we assess our students has a profound effect on what they learn and on the ways in which they learn.”(Race, 2005: xi). In the process of teaching and learning it is common to use class work, homework and examinations but these can pose considerable difficulty for the students with visual impairment. In such practice teachers should know how to apply these addressing the needs of learners with visual impairment.

The following are some of the strategies suggested by Carney, Engbretson, Scammell and Sheppard (2003:33) to conduct fair and constructive assessments.

1. Consider the student’s well-being when assigning homework, particularly if extensive reading or writing is required.
2. Allow additional time for completion of assignments and examinations.
3. Allow the student to complete an examination in more than one sitting, if necessary.
4. Reduce the number of questions to be answered; provide an alternate way of testing the student’s knowledge;
5. Provide a scribe; and give the examination orally.

3.1.6. Inclusive Teaching in the Context of ELT

Effective teaching for children with SNE will be effective if teachers are able to respond to a wider range of needs and this could be achieved through greater differentiation of
tasks and materials, that is, school-based intervention (Davies, 2004)

Some pupils may have specific difficulties in learning languages and may require help in improving their areas of weaknesses and in devising strategies to overcome their difficulties. In the light of this, visually impaired students may require alternative communication systems to compensate for the difficulties they face in using spoken or written language.

In this case, teachers should be encouraged to take specific action to provide access to learning for pupils with special educational needs. According to Davies (2004:27-28), teachers should provide various opportunities for pupils who need help. Some of these are: “using texts that pupils can read and understand; using visual and written materials in different formats, including large print, symbol text and Braille; and using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials.”

Moreover, in order to make inclusive teaching effective in the context of ELT, teachers should have theoretical bases on SNE and inclusion. They also need pedagogical skills required in inclusive classrooms.

In order to make inclusive teaching effective, the following instructional strategies, as suggested by Arthur et al (2006), would be helpful if teachers follow effectively.

a) Plan a lesson from the perspective of setting suitable learning challenges, overcoming barriers and responding to diverse needs.

b) Consider when planning if all pupils have the underlying skills needed to access
the activities within the lesson, e.g. if the activity requires group discussion, do pupils have the necessary skills to work in this way?

c) Make learning objectives explicit – tell pupils what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson, and let them know how this relates to their prior learning.

d) Break lessons down into shorter ‘episodes’ by offering pupils a range of small tasks with clear learning targets.

e) Make use of formative assessment (Clarke, 2001) to monitor individual pupil progress and identify future steps in learning.

f) Use a variety of presentation styles to maximise the chances of engaging all pupils in the lesson.

g) Keep instructions clear and short.

h) Teach ‘self help’ strategies for pupils to use if they are stuck.

i) Mix individual and group work.

j) Make sure praise is consistently used and is available for effort, achievement and pro-social behavior as well as attainment.

k) Plan seating and grouping to reflect the type of learning that is intended to take place.

l) Take the opportunity to review, summarise, assess, secure and reinforce learning after small tasks within lessons and at the end of the lesson.

According to Dhawan(2005:51-52), the following are also very helpful to visually impaired students to learn English.
a) Textbooks and supplementary learning materials can be transmitted into Braille. Various language activities such as story-telling, singing, and role-play can be used to reinforce the children’s language skills and to improve their understanding of the language.

b) Great emphasis should be put on the explanation of synonyms and the homophones. In introducing new vocabulary and language items, more explanation or experience sharing is required as visually impaired children have little actual experience.

c) The teacher should give good language models. By using various learning activities, such as phonetic games, passage reading, sentence making, dialogue practice, report writing, discussions and audio-recording, the children’s interest can be stimulated.

Cooperative learning in the context of inclusive classroom promotes the involvement of all kinds of learners and supports each other in learning a language. In this regard, advocates of cooperative language teaching in general education stress the benefits of cooperation in promoting learning. For example, Johnson et al., (1994) as cited in Richards and Rodgers (2001: 195) noted that

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning. It may be contrasted with competitive
learning in which students work against each other to achieve an academic goal such a grade of ‘A’.

All in all if teachers apply the above strategies and create opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, it would be possible to assure a more active role in their teaching and make VISs benefit a lot in the process of leaning.

3.2. Disability

3.2.1. Defining Disability

Defining what disability is remains problematic as there are many different groups of disabilities and within these groups there are vast individual differences. This implies that attempting to define disability is complex and often quite controversial.

Disability is “the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual’s contextual factors (environmental and personal factors).” (World Report on Disability, 2011: 4)

The report also elaborates that “disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and contested. The transition from an individual, medical perspective to a structural, social perspective has been described as the shift from a ‘medical model’ to ‘social model’ in which people are viewed as being disabled by society rather than by their bodies.” (Ibid)

The International Classification of Functioning (ICF) as cited in UNESCO (2009:101)
referring to ‘Teaching Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings’, defines disability as “the outcome of the interaction between a person with impairment and the environmental and attitudinal barriers s/he may face or a restriction or inability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being, mostly resulting from impairment.”

Disability in Ethiopian context is understood referring to UN definition. According to 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia (p.179),

A person who was unable to carry out or limited in carrying out activities that others can do due to congenital or long term physical/mental disabilities was identified as a disabled person. Short term difficulties due to temporary conditions were excluded. In general, a person was defined as disabled if due to physical or mental injuries could not fully perform activities that other healthy person could do.

The medical model and the social model are often presented as dichotomous, “but disability should be viewed neither as purely medical nor as purely social: persons with disabilities can often experience problems arising from their health condition. A balanced approach is needed, giving appropriate weight to the different aspects of disability.”(World Report on Disability, 2011: 4)

Many of the disabling effects of impairments can be reduced if children have the opportunity to:

a) interact with friends, peers and adults in their community,

b) experience a range of environments that minimize the impact of impairment, for
example buildings that have no steps,

c) be taught by parents and teachers who help them to learn new skills, and
d) meet and learn from other people with disabilities who can become role models
and sources of inspiration. (UNESCO, 2009:7)

3.2.2. Barriers to Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities “face both environmental and individual barriers.” Johnsen
and Skjørten (2001) cited in UNESCO (2009:8). It is further noted that the two types of
barriers are interrelated and manifest in various ways as illustrated below (pp. 8-11).

3.2.2.1. Environmental (and Attitudinal) Barriers

a) **Limited or no access to early intervention programmes** – the disabling effect
of impairment will be multiplied unless there is access to quality early
intervention programmes (support systems). Attitudinal barriers could be
perceived as the basis of all other barriers and these are commonly reflected in
labeling, misunderstanding people’s rights and opportunities, misconceptions,
expectations of work load or developing stereotypes (p. 8).

b) **Teachers, school administrators and school inspectors** – if they discriminate
against children who are perceived to be different from the majority of their peers.
This may be caused due to lack of funding or resources, lack of training, or heavy
work load.

c) **Legal and regulatory systems** - if these are discriminating, segregating and
excluding.
d) **Curricula** – if these are rigid and do not respond to diversity of abilities, needs and circumstances amongst learners

e) **Teaching approaches and teaching/learning material** – if these are not learning-friendly, nor responsive to the diversity of needs and abilities among learners

f) **Assessment and evaluation system** – whether these exclusively or primarily assess the academic level of children according to general standards, rather than individual progress - ideally the academic, social, emotional and physical development should be assessed and evaluated

g) **School and classroom environments** – when these are not inclusive, learning-friendly, or even physically accessible.

### 3.2.2.2. Individual Barriers

a) **Communication** – if a child has a different first language than the majority of their peers, their teacher, and/or the learning material available in the school (this includes children who have sign language as their first language as well as those who use Braille as written language)

b) **Poor motivation** – if children have little or no motivation for learning, due to many different factors, often related to the environmental and attitudinal barriers listed above.

c) **Insecurity, low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence** – (this is likely to be the result of a combination of environmental, attitudinal, and individual barriers – some of which are listed above)
d) **Abuse** – children suffering from psychological, physical, and/or sexual abuse are likely to experience serious barriers to learning, development, and participation. These can be avoided if there is comprehensive intervention from schools and families, as well as a support system (education and health professionals). Children with disabilities (especially those living in segregated education institutions) are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

e) **Gender** – girls with disabilities experience many of the same barriers that non-disabled women and girls face, but their social isolation and dependence on their families often magnifies these barriers, and their consequences. Women and girls with disabilities fare less well on most indicators of educational, professional, financial, and social success than their non-disabled female and disabled male counterparts.

f) **Lack of social competence** – many children experience social difficulties, difficulties that may create barriers to learning, development and participation, and ultimately marginalization in, and exclusion from school. Other difficulties include: interacting and playing with other children; communication; behaving in ways that are seen as socially and culturally “acceptable,” as well as difficulties in accepting boundaries (some of these are related to environmental and attitudinal barriers as well as to impairments).

g) **Temperament** – if a child has moods and rages, is an introvert and has difficulty communicating with her/his peers (as well as parents and teachers), finds it difficult to adapt to new and changing situations, is easily distracted, has a short attention span, and reacts very intensely on positive as well as negative
experiences (many of these temperament/behavior patterns are related to environmental and attitudinal barriers as well as to impairments.

h) **First-generation learners** – if the child is the first in her/his family to go to school; additional support (support system) may be needed to prevent barriers to learning from emerging

Cultural, language and religious minorities – many children belonging to a minority group will face enormous barriers to learning, development and participation. Without targeted support and an inclusive, learning-friendly environment, the barriers these children face may become permanent in nature. Children with disabilities from a minority background will often face additional barriers, and the consequences of the barriers they face will often be more severe than for their non-disabled peers.

3.2.3. Approaches to Disability

According to Rieser(2008:13), there are three approaches with regard to conceptualizing disability. These are: traditional model, the medical model, and social model approach. These are further elaborated in the following:

3.2.3.1. Traditional model

Traditional model believes that disabled people brought bad luck because they had been cursed or had had a spell placed upon them by witchcraft. There are many cultural and
literary manifestations of this model (thinking) which are still being reinforced in myths, legend or literature. There are also stereotypes which are bundles of negative and untrue perceptions which often condition how people treat and respond to disabled people.

3.2.3.2. The medical model approach

This model focuses on the loss of normal function of disabled people and leads to them being viewed as negative or in deficit, needing to be made normal. According to this model, disabled people are viewed as passive receivers of services aimed at cure or management. The trouble was, and often still is that medical science did not know to get rid of many types of impairments.

3.2.3.3. Social model thinking

The focus has shifted from viewing the problem in the person and their permanent impairment to examining the barriers of attitude, organization and environment that deny disabled people access to an ordinary life in the culture and society in which they live in. This model approach recognizes the need to change people’s thinking about disabled people, alter the environment to make it accessible; and transform organizations and their policies, practices and procedures.

Lewis (2009) also states that according to social model perspective disability is not an individual problem or personal circumstance, but an issue of social exclusion. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) as cited in Lewis (2009: 48), recognizes that “disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the
interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Specific measures need to be taken to remove barriers to learning, development and participation of disabled students. The following tips are suggested to reduce these barriers (UNESCO, 2009:13-15).

a) Create an environment in which all children feel equally valued.

b) Children should be allowed time to express their thoughts and opinions. Many children with disabilities will need more time than other children to express themselves.

c) Try to ask children questions (especially those who are struggling with academic learning) that you are confident they will be able to answer. This will build confidence and motivate children to continue their learning.

- Be generous, genuine and honest with praise. This will help children to build confidence and to develop a healthy self-esteem.

- Children should be encouraged to state their opinion, and we should try to use their suggestions wherever it is possible.

d) We should encourage both boys and girls to become involved in all curricular and extra-curricular activities.

e) If a child suddenly changes behavior or acts differently from the way s/he used to, we should try to find out why. If we suspect that this may be caused by abuse (verbal, emotional, physical or sexual), we should seek advice and help from organizations that work with child rights and child protection.
f) Evaluate the academic, social, emotional and physical development (progress) of children, instead of just measuring their performance in comparison to others. The progress children make should be evaluated based on their individual learning plans. These plans should be developed paying close attention to possible barriers to learning, development and participation the child may face.

g) Organize the classroom and seat the children to optimize opportunities for communication, interaction and learning for all the children in the classroom – with special focus on those children who experience barriers to learning, development and participation.

h) Make sure that you let all the children in the class know that you care about them and their needs.

i) Identify at least one good quality that every student has demonstrated over the past month.

3.3. Visual Impairment

3.3.1. Defining Visual Impairment

Visual impairment is a broad term used to describe the complete or partial loss of vision. The definitions of this term may be classified and labeled as educational definition, medical definition, and legal definition. According to Mangal (2007:17) “Educational definition of visual impairment emphasizes relationship between vision and learning and shows difficulties, and deficiencies exhibited in the children which make them different from children with normal vision to the extent of attention, requiring special education provision.”
Medical and legal definitions are based on visual acuity and field of vision. Vision acuity here refers to “one’s ability to see final details or clearly distinguish forms at varying distance.” (Mangal, 2007:17).

Visual acuity is usually measured by having people read letters or discriminate objects at a distance of 20 feet. Those who are able to read the letters correctly have normal vision. Visual acuity usually expressed at a ratio that tells us how well the individual sees. In this respect “The expression 20/20 vision describes perfect (normal) vision; it means that the person can see at a 20 feet what people with normal vision see at 20 feet. A person with 20/90 vision needs to be 20 feet away to discriminate letter or objects that people with normal vision can read or discriminate at 90 feet.” (Barraga and Erin, 1992) cited in Ysseldyke and Algozzine( 1998: 377). The following acknowledged definitions also illustrate each type of definition as cited in Mangal (2007: 17).

**Love (1975):** Visually impaired children are those children who have such marked visual difficulties that even with the best medical and optical care they cannot see well enough to profit by the educational facilities that are provided for children with normal vision.

**Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992:** Visually handicapped means a person who suffers from any of the following conditions, namely: total absence of light, visual acuity not exceeding 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses, or limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degree or worse.

According to Dhawan(2005:42), “The greatest challenges most children with visual impairment face are difficulties in mobility (moving around independently), difficulties
understanding and using non-verbal communication (facial expressions and body language), and difficulties with written communication (because most of their peers read and write regular ink print).” In this case, these challenges would be very strong to children with visual impairment and teachers in inclusive setting where there are no resources for teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

In 1992, WHO, as cited by Dhawan(2005:45), offered an alternative, working definition of low vision as “impairment of visual functioning even after treatment and/or standard refractive correction, where a visual acuity is less than 6/18 to light perception, or visual field is less than 10 degrees from the point of fixation, but where vision is used for the planning and/or execution of a task for which vision is essential.”

Children may have eye conditions that limit the clarity and range of vision, so that their world is blurry or has missing sections. Children who have little or no vision will learn mainly through hearing and touch, and is especially important for them to have physical contact with learning materials and involvements in events. (Erin and Spungin, 2004)

3.3.2. Learning and Vision

The relation between learning and vision can be understood by citing the work of Ysseldyke and Algozzine(1998) in this regard. In the light of this, Ysseldyke and Algozzine(1998, 380-383) mentioned the following important points which characterize the relation between learning and vision. Some of these are general and some others are specific but they indicate how children with visual impairments learn and develop concepts and indicate what should be done to ease the process learning.
**Cognition** is largely a matter of developing concepts. Because many concepts are learned entirely through visual means, students with visual impairments have difficulty learning some concepts, eg, concepts like orange, circle, bigger, perpendicular or rectangular.

The impact of visual impairments on academic performance is very much a result of the severity of the condition (that is, the degree of vision loss and causes) and the age at which the student’s vision was reduced. With appropriate assistance, people with visual impairments achieve academic success just like their neighbors and peers.

The academic needs of students with visual impairments require a dual curriculum perspective that consists of the traditional academic content taught to their peers as well as disability-specific content needed for success in traditional curriculum.

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The academic needs of students with visual impairments require a dual curriculum perspective that consists of the traditional academic content taught to their peers as well as disability-specific content needed for success in traditional curriculum.

In general, there are a few social and emotional characteristics specific to people with visual disabilities; however, low vision and blindness may influence a child’s behavior.
Non-academic skills that may be affected include social skills, affective understanding, and nonverbal or body language behavior.

**Social skills:** These are important to a child’s overall success. Children need instruction and feedback in appropriate ways of interacting with others, such as initiating conversation without eye contact, facial expression. Many students with VIIs cannot see nonverbal forms of communication, so they miss out on the information and feelings displayed with a look, a nod, a smile, a frown, or a shrug.

**Adaptations for reading:** This is a major area in which students with visual impairments experience difficulty. To” read,” for example, they sometimes have to use large print books, special reading methods (Braille), recorded materials and readers.

**Choosing a literacy medium:** A major area of emphasis critical to the literacy needs of students with VIIs is determining an appropriate literacy medium based on an assessment of individual communication and learning skills. The decision to use Braille or print (or a combination) for reading and writing may be an obvious decision for a child who is totally blind, but it can be a difficult one for a child with low vision.

### 3.3. Educational Implications of Visual Impairment

Carney et al (2003:6) in their work entitled ‘Teaching Students with Visual Impairments’ stated that “students with visual impairments sometimes have limited natural learning experiences because they are not able to observe objects and interactions.” They also added that “the areas of learning which are particularly affected due to visual limitation
are: concept development; interpersonal communication skills; life skills; orientation and mobility skills; and academic development.”

Furthermore, they mentioned that “Development of concepts is the basis of all learning. Spatial relationships, time, body awareness and self-awareness are just a few examples of fundamental concepts individuals need to make sense of their world.” (Ibid)

Hence, these concepts may need to be specifically taught to students with visual impairments. Although the main focus will be on academic development, providing a variety of opportunities for personal development can have a profound impact on a student who is visually impaired.

Furthermore, “Encouraging a positive self-image, good interpersonal communication, appropriate behaviors, increased independence and productive community living can all be tremendously beneficial in the healthy growth of students with visual impairments.” (pp. 6-7)

With regard to learners’ development (p. 7) they also stated that

The development of a student with a visual impairment is affected by: the type and severity of the visual impairment, the onset of the visual impairment, the nature and degree of intervention; the use of residual vision; personality, the availability of equipment and resources, the presence of other disabilities, family adjustment and acceptance, and cultural attitudes to visual impairment.

In the process of teaching children with visual impairments, UNESCO (2009:48-52) recommended the following as guidelines to be practiced in inclusive context.
1. Select books with good print quality and layout. The text should ideally be left-aligned. This will make it easier for children with low vision to read, with a minimum of assistive devices. It will also benefit other children who struggle with reading.

2. Books and other reading material should be provided in Braille for those who depend on Braille for reading and writing. The books should be provided for free or at the same price that sighted children pay for their books (in ink print).

3. Children who write Braille should have access to writing frames and stylus for free, or at the same price as pen and pencils.

4. Appropriate visual devices should be provided to children with low vision based on their individual needs as well as availability of devices.

5. Orientation and mobility (O&M) training should be provided – how to move about with a white cane, use trailing techniques as well as touch and protection techniques, effective use of landmarks (including sound and echo), guiding techniques (human guide) as well as techniques for free movement in space.

6. Space awareness activities – enable children with visual impairment to move about in open space in order to feel confident and in control over their own bodies and movements.

7. Activities of daily living – many children with visual impairment need training in performing daily tasks that most other children learn by mimicking and copying their parents, siblings and peers.

8. Seat the children with visual impairment in front so that they can hear well because they will depend more on their hearing than most other children, both for
learning and participation.

9. If some classrooms in the school are noisier than others – (noise from busy roads, or factories), the school should be flexible and move the class which has children with visual impairment to a less noisy classroom.

10. We should seat children with low vision so that they can maximize the use of their residual vision as well as prevent them from being blinded by light (reflection from sunshine and other light sources). Many children who are blind have some light perception and feel bothered by light, while others will benefit from light because they will be able to use their light perception for mobility purposes.

11. The seating arrangements should be fixed or at least not changed too frequently, so that the children can orient themselves and find the way to their seats independently, as well as know where all their friends are seated (located).

12. Prevent the classroom, especially floor areas, from being cluttered to ease mobility for the children concerned and prevent accidents and injuries.

13. Think about a “goal” that should be set for the child with visual impairment (what should be learned throughout the school year), and try to find ways and strategies to help the child achieve this goal. This will help a teacher to plan for when he/she might need external support from an itinerant resource teacher, or an assistant teacher (if these are available), how the other children in the class can help out, and what kind of adjusted teaching and learning material would be needed.

14. Spend some time to explain to the child with visual impairment about the process of learning in class before they start, especially in classes where series of different
activities are required….It is also important to explain and show how different equipment that is used in the class works because children with visual impairment might not be able to follow the general instructions.

15. Read everything that is written on the blackboard aloud and slowly.

16. Try to speak while facing the children (not away from them) because children with visual impairment greatly depend on their hearing to receive information, and they need to hear you clearly.

17. Involve the other children in the class to help out. Explaining a visual concept to a person who cannot see is an interesting challenge for most sighted children (and adults). It can help them to see things from different perspectives and deepen their understanding of shapes, colours and functions. Assisting their friends with visual impairment will contribute greatly to their social, emotional and academic development, and be mutually enriching.

18. Encourage the class to think about how to include their peers with visual impairment in the lesson. Inclusion is not just the responsibility of teachers, but also of students. Through physical education, children can learn how to include their peers with disabilities in after-school activities, as well. This is one of the most important points in inclusive education because children with visual impairment tend to be excluded from most after-school activities, even when they are included in regular classroom activities.

19. Produce tactile learning material as part of “class projects.” If the children make tactile maps, for example, it will help all children learn geography better, especially children who depend on oral and tactile information for learning.
20. Use real objects that the child can feel and handle, rather than just working abstractly with pen and paper. This is important for all children, but especially for children with disabilities.

21. It is difficult for a child with visual impairment to understand the concept of “things,” especially very large and very small things. Therefore, provide as many opportunities as possible for the children to touch different “things.” If a big tree has fallen down or been cut down near the school, take the children there to see and touch it. This will provide better understanding of size, height and length for all the children in the class, not “just” for the child with visual impairment.

22. Remember that it takes much, much longer to write Braille characters than ink letters – one character can have up to five dots. Those dots are embossed separately, when using a stylus, and a writing-frame.

All the above points are crucial in making inclusive teaching effective. Hence, as a classroom teacher is a key person in planning and implementing an inclusive program, he/she needs orientation or training about what they mean and how to convert these into practice so that the teacher can modify instructional methods and materials to meet the needs of visually impaired students.

In this chapter, various pertinent theoretical issues in relation to SNE and inclusive education were raised as a basis for the study. These issues were also made to interplay with disability in general and VISs in particular in the context of teaching and learning English language. Other factors which could be taken as requirements for the success of
inclusive education were also mentioned to be used as a reference for assessing the practice of inclusive education in the site selected for the study. In the forthcoming chapter the methodological aspect and procedure of the study are clarified.

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