“I can complain because rose bushes have thorns or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses. It’s all how you look at it.”

(J. Kenfield Morley)

1.1 Introduction

Every individual has an individual profile of characteristics, abilities and challenges that may be inherited and/or consequence of learning and development. Each person contributes his or her unique part to the world on the basis of his or her own potentials and capabilities. No two human beings, even identical twins on this planet respond in the same way to the same stimulus. This uniqueness makes individuals different from one another. The differences among individuals may be with respect to their cognitive, behavioural, physical, psychological, sensory and many more areas of characteristics. Sometimes these differences are to such an extent that people may deviate from the status considered as normal. However being different is not always negative but sometimes individuals are different from other individuals of the same life age due to functional loses in one or more areas in different proportions; this may lead them to impairment which may result into disability. A disability may be from birth or occur during a person's lifetime due to manmade calamities or natural calamities. The existence of disabled members is not uncommon in any society or community but most of the time disabled are excluded physically, socially, academically and in many other areas. They live in the society but their needs are not addressed properly. Their disability is perceived as a deficit, and often they are segregated from their non-disabled family, peers and community. Continued segregation may foster stereotypes, ignorance, stigma, fear and prejudices in disabled, which may limit their participation in community as well as society and action as a whole. To overcome this hazardous situation, the significant
persons related to a disabled individual are required to understand the ecology of a disabled child i.e. nature and nurture. While a child’s behavior is determined by his or her genetic makeup on one hand, nurture certainly plays a major role in determining how the child will respond to the condition itself. So to realize the complexity of the interactions of nature and nurture is the need of the hour which will surely affect the performance of disabled children in different life spheres.

Disability is an umbrella term that includes various categories of people with different characteristics. It is a functional consequence of an impairment or change in the body or human functioning. In disability the individual’s actual ability is compared to normal functioning. Disabled are the people who are unable to perform certain activities like majority of the population does them without others’ help or any kind of assistance. Disability means an existing difficulty in performing one or more activities which in accordance with the subject’s age, sex and normative social role are generally accepted as essential basic components of daily living (RCI, 2000). The United Nations defined disability as: “Any restriction or lack (resulting from impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner within the range considered normal for a human being”. The extent to which disability affects a person’s life depends very much on the environment in which a person lives- social, cultural, psychological and physical (IDEA, 1997). There are various types of disabilities such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental retardation, locomotor impairment, autism, deaf blindness, cerebral palsy and others. Since the disability may affect the organs or body parts of an individual and his/her participation in different spheres of life, it becomes a multi dimensional experience for the person involved.
The disabled population is calculated in every country in a different way for certain reasons like cultural differences, methods of data collection, differences in the definitions of different categories and so on. In India, the 2001 Census (Registrar General of India, 2001) and the 2002 National Sample Survey 58th Round (NSSO, 2003) are two main large data-sets to estimate the prevalence of disability. The following table depicts the disabled population in the country as per the 2001 Census.

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Disabled Persons in India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Disabled Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Rate (Per Lakh Population)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 2001, G.O.I.

The above table shows that there are 21.91 million disabled people in India which constitute 2.13 percent of the total population. However, the National Sample Survey 58th round (July-December 2002) reported that 1.85 percent (18.5 million) of the total Indian population had a disability. This statistics make clear that around 18-22 million people with disabilities are there in our country. The discrepancy in estimates may be due to the fundamental differences of the definitions of disability used by these two enquiries (Mitra and Sambamoorthi, 2006). This gross estimation is still argued, especially when one considers the World Health Organization estimates of disability which reported a global prevalence rate of 10 percent. Even though current disability figures are not the most reliable, yet seek immediate attention. The table 1.2 provides category wise percentage of disabled persons in terms of their distribution in the population.
Table 1.2

Classification of Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Disability</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) In Seeing</td>
<td>10,634,881</td>
<td>5,732,338</td>
<td>4,902,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(48.5%)</td>
<td>(53.90%)</td>
<td>(46.10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) In Speech</td>
<td>1,640,868</td>
<td>942,095</td>
<td>698,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.5%)</td>
<td>(57.41%)</td>
<td>(42.59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) In Hearing</td>
<td>1,261,722</td>
<td>673,797</td>
<td>587,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.8%)</td>
<td>(53.40%)</td>
<td>(46.60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) In Movement</td>
<td>6,105,477</td>
<td>3902752</td>
<td>2202725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(27.9%)</td>
<td>(63.92%)</td>
<td>(36.08%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Mental</td>
<td>2,263,821</td>
<td>1,354,653</td>
<td>909,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10.3%)</td>
<td>(59.84%)</td>
<td>(40.16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>21,906,769</td>
<td>12,605,635</td>
<td>9,301,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.13%)</td>
<td>(57.54%)</td>
<td>(42.46%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 2001, G.O.I.

The above table depicts that only five types of disabilities were covered by the Census 2001. Out of the total disabled population 58 percent were males while 42 percent were females. It is also clear by the corresponding pie diagram that of 2.13 percent of disabled, the visually challenged constitute 48.5 percent followed by locomotor or orthopedically challenged (28 percent), mental disabilities (10 percent), speech (7.5 percent) and hearing disability (5.8 percent) respectively. The present situation is very alarming; a person with any kind of disability should not be isolated and overlooked just for the reason that he or she is disabled. This situation needs to be changed keeping in mind specific needs of the large number of disabled persons. No nation can progress in real sense until all the sections of the society are given equal opportunities to grow and develop. Education plays a very vital role to fill this lacuna among different sections of the society. Thus systematic provisions for education can help people with disabilities to recognize their
abilities and to transform their shortcomings into opportunities. With the facility of education they can be rehabilitated in all spheres of life. In this way they can also become capable and useful members of the society and contribute in the progress of the nation.

Education is the process of human development in desirable fashion. It is the most effective and powerful instrument of social change. It often initiates upward movement in the social structure and helps to bridge the gap between different sections of the society. Education is not only a vehicle of growth but it is also an effective and reliable instrument to ensure social justice. A good quality education makes an individual a right thinker, an independent decision maker, skilled worker and a better citizen. It not only promotes academic development but also explores vocational possibilities and self-sufficiency of the individuals leading them for all round personality development. It prepares an individual for his/her fullest contribution in making the nation constantly rise to the higher levels of achievement in various areas. It is also being seen as the most effective vehicle for social and economic empowerment which is very important for a country like India, which after 65 years of independence has not been able to eradicate illiteracy in spite of the various constitutional provisions. Education is now recognized as a fundamental human right. The 86th amendment of the Constitution of India ensures right to education to every child including children with disabilities. Needless to mention that the disabled children face more problems than most others in accessing schools and receiving an education that both recognizes and meets their special needs as well as include them in the society by giving them equal opportunities. The discussion in coming pages is based on the historical review of educational provisions for disabled in India,
legislative measures for their education etc. which will give insight into educational status of this section of the society.

1.2 Education for the Disabled in India: Historical Development

All over the world the education of children with disabilities has evolved through five stages. The first stage was of rejection or neglect as they were not considered to have the right to live in the society. The second stage refers to the stage of mercy or pity which allowed them to live in the society and not to die. This was followed by the era of education of these children which resulted in the establishment of special schools by philanthropists and social reformers. Then came the time when the concepts of mainstreaming and integration of these children in regular schools were evolved. This stage was quite encouraging from the viewpoint of their personality as well as academic development. The latest trend is of inclusive education which emphasizes placing the persons with disabilities in the general education system. In developed countries school systems which have historically parallel general and special schools are moving from mainstreaming and integration towards evolving inclusive schools (Ainscow, 1994). The knowledge and processes of educating the disabled children came to India in the last two decades of the 19th century in the form of special education. Christian missionaries in 1880s started schools for the disabled as charitable undertakings. Later on in 1883 an institute for the deaf and mute was established in Bombay. The first school for the blind was established in 1887 by Miss Anne Sharp in Amritsar. The services for the physically disabled were also initiated in the middle of the 20th century. Unfortunately children with mental retardation were the last to receive attention as the first school for these children was established only in 1984 (Mishra, 2000). The history reveals that earlier special
education programmes were heavily dependent on voluntary initiatives but efforts have also been made by the Indian Government in this regard. In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) report was presented by John Sargent. The report clarified that whatever had been done till 1944 it was done by voluntary agencies. The report also suggested that the education of the handicapped should not be ignored by the government of India. This report has the status of a landmark in the policy of education of disabled as it emphasized for the first time that these children should be taught in special schools only when it is not possible to teach them in general schools. It made two most important recommendations:

a) Education of disabled should be an integral part of the education system of India;

b) Separate fund for the education of disabled should be allocated.

After independence the Education Commission was appointed in 1964 headed by Dr. D.S.Kothari and the report was presented in 1966. The Commission made many recommendations on equalization of educational opportunities including the recommendations for handicapped children’s education and rehabilitation. It stated “Their education has to be organized not merely on humanitarian grounds, but also on grounds of utility. Proper education generally enables a handicapped child to overcome largely (his or her) handicap, and makes him a useful citizen”. Further it suggested that “the education of handicapped children should be an inseparable part of the general educational system”.

The National Education Policy (NEP, 1968) followed all the recommendations made by the Education Commission (1964-66). ‘Integrated Programmes’ were the main focus of
the policy for enabling the handicapped children for studying in the schools meant for non-disabled or normal children. The policy also recommended for the expansion of educational facilities for physically and mentally handicapped children. Then after two decades the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) under the heading of “Education for the Handicapped” recommended to educate the mildly handicapped in inclusive education system and severely handicapped in special schools. The Policy also recommended teachers’ training programs to deal with special difficulties of handicapped children.

Some modifications in the NPE (1986) were felt essential. Therefore the Programme of Action (1992) was chalked out. The POA emphasized on universal enrollment by the end of 9th five year plan for both categories of children: those who could be educated in general primary schools and those who required education in special schools or special classes in general schools (MHRD, 1992). The reorientation of pre-service and in-service teacher education programs was also emphasized.

Apart from this in 1974 the Government of India launched the centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). The focus of the scheme was to provide educational opportunities to children with special needs in regular schools, to facilitate their retention in the school system, and to place children from special schools to common schools.

With the financial support from UNICEF the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) implemented the Project of Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) during 1987. The purpose was to strengthen implementation of IEDC within the framework and goals of the NPE (1986). UNICEF provided support for the development
of instructional material, training of parents and personnel, mobilizing community support and co-ordination of the project in remote and rural areas and difficult places.

By the mid 1990s evolving from the national experience with area specific projects, a nationwide plan popularly known as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) put local communities in charge of education. From the year 1995 the education of children with disabilities has also been included as integral component of the programme. It emphasized that all such children in the selected districts would be enrolled for inclusive education at the primary level. With the adoption of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for action (1994) on Special Needs Education, a policy agenda for inclusive education has been set on a global basis. India is signatory to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). There is a rapid incorporation of the term ‘inclusive education’ in various official documents, reports published by institutions such as the NCERT and media after adoption of this framework. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education categorically recommended inclusive schools for CWSN by making appropriate modifications in the content, presentation and transaction strategies, preparing teachers and developing learning-friendly evaluation procedures (NCERT, 2000).

The Government of India launched Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001 in partnership with state governments to achieve the long cherished goal of Universalization of Elementary Education. The aim of this programme is to provide eight years of uninterrupted, good quality education to children between the ages of 6-14 years and to have all children in school, learning and completing primary and upper primary cycles by 2010. It also ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category
and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. It was realized by the framers of SSA that their objective could only be met if the education of children with special needs (CWSN) was an important part of the programme. The SSA has a specific feature i.e. Zero Rejection Policy which suggests that no child having special needs can be neglected, not denied enrollment on the basis of such concerns. By the year 2002, the IEDC scheme had extended to 41,875 schools, benefitting more than 1,33,000 disabled children in 27 States and four Union Territories(Department of Education, MHRD, 2003) while DPEP (2003) reported that the Total number of learners with SEN enrolled in regular schools under DPEP was more than 5,60,000: this represents almost 70% of the nearly 8,10,000 learners with SEN identified under this programme.

1.3 National Landmarks in the field of Legislation:

The International Year for Disabled Persons (IYDP), 1981 was very significant year. In this year, in India also the education of the disabled was considered to be as a human resource development. Prior to this the education of the disabled, which was catered to largely in special schools, came under the purview of Department of Social welfare. This shift was considered significant because it helped to create awareness in the general education system that disabled persons are also “human resources” and can become contributing members of the society.

In 1987 Mental Health Act was enacted to give provisions for rehabilitation and treatment of people with mental health difficulties. This act includes the services like establishment and maintenance of psychiatric hospitals or nursing homes, inspection,
discharge, leave of absence and removal of mentally ill person and management of his property etc. In the 1990’s two historical legislation were enacted namely the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 and The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

The RCI Act (1992) passed in Parliament was created by the Ministry of Welfare to regulate manpower development programmes in the field of education of children with special needs. It aimed to prescribe and regulate minimum standards of education in all training institutions uniformly throughout the country as well as to encourage continuing rehabilitation education by way of collaboration with organizations working in the field of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

The PWD Act (1995) was passed by both the houses of Parliament and it came into force on 7th February, 1996 as Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. This act seeks to place the disabled persons at par with other sections of the society in respect of education, employment, educational and vocational training and social security. With the emergence of this act services for disabled children are no more considered welfare rather it is the right of the disabled child. This act ensures full life to disabled individuals so as to make full contribution in accordance with their disability conditions. This historic act indicates the commitment of the Government of India towards the services to persons with disabilities. As per the act the central and state government shall ensure that every child with disability has access to free and adequate education till the age of 18 years. It also indicates that integrated education and special schools will have to be set up to meet the educational needs of the children with disabilities. Introduction of non-formal education, functional literacy
schemes, provisions of aids and appliances, education through open schools and universities etc. are also stressed in the act. It also indicates that the government should create adequate teacher training facilities to prepare teachers for special and integrated schools.

In 1999, another act was introduced in the Parliament namely The National Trust for welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999. PWD Act, 1995 covered only seven disability conditions which are blindness, low vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental illness and mental retardation but Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Disabilities were not included in this act. However, the National Trust Act, 1999 provide for the constitution of a body at the national level for the welfare of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities and for the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

1.4 Efforts made by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

Education of children with special needs has a long tradition in the non-governmental sector however the welfare approach is continued in government programmes. Support is provided to voluntary organizations for the establishment of model schools and employment exchanges for the disabled. Provisions are also made for scholarships, for prevention and early identification of disabling conditions, for the development of functional skills, and for aids and appliances for the disabled. Nongovernmental organizations assume unusual significance with respect to the education of children with disabilities and much of the most innovative work in education for them continues to happen outside the public system (or through partnership where the government finances
non-governmental service delivery). But there are no comprehensive statistics on the numbers of NGOs which work in the disability sector.

It has been mentioned in the preceding pages that some efforts have been made by both government and non-government organizations to educate children with disabilities and increase their access to schools. At present there is a paradigm shift from segregation to inclusion of these children in major educational programmes like DPEP, SSA etc. However, evidence of such shift is still lacking in practice. Special education enables the teachers to focus on the needs of disabled children and these schools are equipped with the resources that are required as per the needs of the disabled children. However, the special education system is based on the principle of segregation and not integration. It is also considered to be violator of the Human Rights as it leads to the formation of a specific disability culture (Janshala, 2003). In Indian scenario, it turns out to be an expensive investment and to realize the goal of ‘education for all’ other alternatives need to be evaluated and analyzed. In inclusive education, the disabled children are taught in general education classrooms along with children of their age who do not suffer from disabilities. This system of education ensures that the disabled children are not isolated at any stage and helps them to develop a sense of worth, standing and belonging in society. It also enables sensitization of children who are not disabled and helps to form a disabled friendly society which is impossible in the special education system setup. However there is a great difference in the opinions regarding which system of education is better for disabled individuals.

Despite of all the efforts of the government, NGOs and society the educational status of persons with disabilities is still far from satisfactory. According to the Census, 2001 fifty
one percent persons with disabilities are illiterate. The following table depicts the current picture of percentage of literacy among different categories of disabled:

Table 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Disability</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) In Seeing</td>
<td>59.56%</td>
<td>38.50%</td>
<td>49.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) In Speech</td>
<td>41.91%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>36.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) In Hearing</td>
<td>55.73%</td>
<td>28.79%</td>
<td>43.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) In Movement</td>
<td>65.44%</td>
<td>43.08%</td>
<td>57.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Mental</td>
<td>43.68%</td>
<td>29.27%</td>
<td>37.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58.15%</td>
<td>37.32%</td>
<td>49.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source: Census of India, 2001, G.O.I.**

The above table shows the literacy rate of various categories of disabled people. The literacy level of the disabled population is only 49 percent when compared to a National literacy figure of around 65 percent (Census, 2001). Literacy rates for the male disabled population is around 58 percent and for females it is around 37 percent compared to national average of over 75 percent and 54 percent for the male and female population respectively. According to NSSO, 2002, only 25 percent of the literate population of people with disabilities had received education up to the primary level (five years of schooling), 11 percent up to the middle level (eight years), while a mere 9 percent had nine or more years (Singhal, 2009).
It is also evident from the above table that highest literacy rate is of people with movement disability. But surprisingly the second highest rate is of the people with visual disability i.e. 49.85 percent. However this percentage is far from satisfactory keeping in view their total population. The visually challenged constitute the largest percentage (48.5 percent) of the total disabled population (as given in table 1.2) and every fifth visually challenged person of the world lives in India (Kundu, 2000). DISE (2006-07) reported that only 20.79 percent of children with visual impairment are enrolled in primary classes, their percentage in upper primary classes is as high as 32.87. It makes clear that this minority section of the society is most neglected in terms of education that affects their employment and total rehabilitation. This situation has emerged due to the negative attitudes of sighted members of the society and lack of awareness about the psychological needs of the blind which limit their opportunities to excel and to live life in a normal way (Sheikh, 2002). The educational status of the visually challenged children can be improved if due focus is laid on analyzing their personality characteristics along with the sharpening of skills, talents and assets they possess not primarily on that they are lacking.

1.5 Visual Impairment

Visual impairment and its related disability both are similar to other disabilities but person suffering from visual impairment is treated differently as this is a visible disability. Different terms have been used to represent children with defects in vision who need special assistance in education or rehabilitation such as visually impaired, visually disabled, visually challenged, visually handicapped etc. However, these terms have different philosophical meanings and imply different applications. In addition to the
presence of visual impairments, the degree of visual impairment must also be considered i.e. partially sightedness (or low vision) and blind. Each of these groups can be defined either from a legal (clinical) or educational (functional) point of view. As per the PWD Act 1995, blindness refers to a condition where a person suffers from any of the following conditions, namely

(i) total absence of sight, or

(ii) visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 (snellen) in the better eye with correcting lenses; or

(iii) limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degree or worse.

As per the Act, “person with low vision” means a person with impairment of visual functioning even after treatment or standard refractive correction but who uses or is potentially capable of using vision for the planning or execution of a task with appropriate assistive devices.

In an educational (functional) definition, emphasis is placed on how the individuals use residual vision. Partially sighted or low vision students, although having significant visual problems, can still use their vision as a primary sense to deal with day-to-day visual demands. Blind students on the other hand, are those, who are so severely challenged that they must learn Braille to read and write as well.

The characteristics of visually challenged children are influenced by a number of internal factors and the factors available in the environment. Various research studies have been conducted to study the visually disabled individuals psychologically. Abdi and Zaidi (1991) concluded that visually impaired children did not have any specific fear or threat
in test situations. Reddy and Rajguru (1994) concluded that totally blind children have higher self-concept than the low-vision children. Mc Alpin and Moore (1995) concluded that visually impaired children’s level of understanding of mind and the limited or nonexistent visual information affect the quality of their social interactions. Neelam (1997) found no significant relationship between self-concept, originality factor of creativity and type of school of visually impaired students. Pervez and Yaqub (2001) reported that the level of happiness of blind children was very much associated with their level of life satisfaction as a whole. Christy et al. (2002) revealed that visually impaired subjects showed no significant problems on expression of moods, feelings, preferences and decisions making. Chaturvedi (2002) concluded that prolonged deprivation significantly influence the positive self-evaluation, integration of personality and total mental health of visually impaired children. Joshi (2002) reported that visually impaired subjects involved in sports perceived less physical and psychological distress compared to those who were not involved. Sharma et al. (2002) inferred that visually impaired children were identified with frequent challenging behaviours such as withdrawal, hyperactivity, stereotyped mannerism, irritability, aggression, inappropriate speech and self injury. Gairola et al. (2005) revealed that the congenital blind were more altruistic than sighted and acquired blind. Afroz and Mittra (2005) concluded that most of the visually handicapped students show high self-worth and acceptance of self in spite of visual disability. Eniola (2007a) found significant improvement in aggressive behaviour pattern of visually impaired adolescents when treated with emotional Intelligence Tracing (EIT) and Self-Regulation Training (SRT). Eniola and Busari (2007) reported that the visually impaired students were unable to improve their self-efficacy with the use of
emotional intelligence. Eniola and Adebiyi (2007) found that emotional intelligence and goal setting contribute significantly in enhancing motivation to work among visually impaired students. Sharma (2008) found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health of college students with visual impairment whereas a negative relationship of emotional intelligence with alienation and frustration. Tarannum and Khatoon (2009) reported that gender is the significant predictor of emotional stability of visually challenged students. Panda (2009) concluded that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with level of aspiration and educational achievement of visually impaired adolescent girls. Chaudhary and Phogat (2010) reported that low anxious totally visually challenged males are better adjusted than high anxious males.

Some researchers have argued that visually challenged possess similar personality patterns as their sighted counterparts. Zehran (1965) concluded that blind children possess the same personality characteristics, the drives, motives, needs and capacities as the sighted. Vander Kolk (1981) found no evidence that suggests significant, long-term personality trait differences between individuals with visual impairments and those who are sighted. Obiakor and Stile (1990) refuted the notion that visually impaired children have poorer self-concepts than normally sighted children. Moore and Paul (1993) concluded that visually impaired students’ self-estimates of their ability to complete educational requirements for occupations did not differ from those of sighted students. Visually impaired students did not differ based on degree of sight loss on measures of occupational self-efficacy. Beaty and Alan (1994) found no difference between visually impaired and non-impaired undergraduates on psychosocial adjustment. Viyas (1995)
opined that blind and sighted students were similar in respect of self-concept. Sengupta (1999) revealed that blind and partially impaired children were similar to sighted children in continuous direct and indirect measurement, but they lagged behind in conservation discrete measurement. Lifshitz et al. (2007) found a similar self-concept profile for sighted adolescents and adolescents with visual impairment. However, a number of studies reported that visually challenged individuals have different personality characteristics than sighted. Jan et al. (1990) concluded that visual impairment affects the total process of gathering and exchanging information, motor skills, cognition and social skills. Cornelissen et al. (1991) found direct link between the efficiency of visual processing and the accuracy of reading and concluded that visually impaired children made more reading errors than sighted. Troster and Brambring (1992) revealed that blind infants exhibited a more limited social and emotional development than sighted infants. Nada and Michael (1995) reported that the blind students performed the classification tasks with figurative base less successfully than did their sighted counterparts. Corley and Linda (1996) concluded that the ability of children with low vision to recall back is lower than their fully sighted counterparts. Satapathy and Singhal (2003) revealed that visually impaired adolescents were less stressed and exhibited less behavior problems than the non-impaired adolescents. Julka (2005) found a significant effect of the vision status on the functioning of the cognitive architecture. The children with visual impairments showed a slowness of functioning of cognitive architecture than sighted. Naseema and Usha (2007) reported that normal pupils were significantly better than visually impaired in respect to their self concept, school
adjustment and achievement in mathematics. Puch et al. (2007) concluded that the format of the task influences performance more than the child's visual ability.

Apart from personality, academic achievement of students has always been a matter of great concerns for researchers also. Needless to mention that scholastic achievement depends upon a number of factors. Researchers have studied these children academically also as many academic tasks are visual in nature. Researchers have attempted to know the realities in this regard. Nisar (1990) found that congenitally blind were superior in academic performance when compared with adventitiously blind. Effendi (1993) revealed that frustration affects the school achievement of the visually disabled school going students. Reddy and Rajguru (1994) concluded that self-concept and achievement of visually impaired are positively correlated. Lali (1995) reported that the children with visual impairment scholastically performed at par with their non-disabled peers in integrated setting. Neelam (1997) concluded that visually impaired students studying in government schools with high socio-economic status and positive self concept were found to be more fluent, more flexible in their responses as compared to those studying in private schools. Viyas (1995) opined that academic achievement levels of these students are somewhat retarded in comparison to sighted students. Khan (1999) found that visually challenged were lower in mathematics but higher in literature and their recall power was found to be superior. The investigator concluded that retardation in academic status may be because of the imbalanced personality of the child. Sheikh (2002) concluded that school achievement of visually disabled students may be predicted on the basis of their frustration level. Agarwal (2004) opined that semi-integrated setting was most effective in imparting special as well as general academic
skills to the visually impaired students. Sharma (2005) reported that the family climate and self–esteem of visually disabled children play a very vital role in their academic life. Klinkosz et al. (2006) found no main effect of visual status on academic achievement of visually impaired students. Khan (2006) concluded that educational aspiration and academic success of visually challenged students are positively and significantly related with each other. Moreover vocational preference also played an important role in determining their academic success. Panda (2009) found significant positive correlation between educational achievement and emotional intelligence of visually disabled adolescent girls. Rani (2011) concluded that academic achievement of visually disabled students has a significant positive correlation with emotional intelligence. Moreover, academic achievement of visually disabled students placed in integrated schools is significantly higher than their counterparts in segregated schools. Singh et al. (2011) revealed that academic achievement of visually impaired students is significantly related to study habits, study related variables and socio-demographic variables.

The review of the related literature reveals that a number of studies (Abdi and Zaidi,1991; Dorothy and Kielly,1994; Reddy and Rajguru,1994 ; Neelam,1997; Viyas,1997; Khan, 1999; Pervez and Yaqub, 2001; Christy et al.,2002; Tarannum and Khatoon , 2009; Chaturvedi , 2002; Sharma et al., 2002; Gairola et al., 2005; Afroz and Mittra ,2005; Eniola ,2007a; Eniola and Busari, 2007; Eniola and Adebiyi ,2007; Sharma, 2008; Panda,2009; Chaudhary and Phogat, 2010) have been conducted to explore personal factors of visually challenged students.

Unveiling the complex determinants of scholastic achievement is one of the recurrent themes to be noticed in educational research. But the factors that affect scholastic
achievement of visually challenged children have not been researched sufficiently keeping in view their population. A large number of reasons may be responsible for this kind of situation such as lack of interest of researchers, difficulties in conducting studies or many other research related issues in this particular field. However, a few attempts have been made to identify predictors of their scholastic achievement (Nisar, 1990; Effendi, 1993; Reddy and Rajguru, 1994; Lali, 1995; Punani, 1997; Sheikh, 2002; Agarwal, 2004; Sharma, 2005; Klinkosz, et al., 2006; Khan, 2006; Panda, 2009; Rani, 2011; Singh, et al., 2011). The discussion in the preceding pages indicates that a number of factors like self-concept, educational aspiration, frustration, test anxiety, self-esteem, study habits, vocational aspirations, emotional intelligence, family climate, type of school, socio-economic status, parental education etc. are significant correlates of scholastic achievement of visually challenged students. It is evident that along with several external factors which play significant role in determining academic success or failure of visually challenged students, there exist a number of factors which are more internal in nature and vital for academic success. But it is not feasible in a single research to employ all the factors mentioned above for predicting the scholastic achievement. Thus, there is a great dearth of such a study which provides an insight about the psychological predictors of achievement of visually challenged students. Besides, no attempt seems to have been made so far to find out the combined prognostic value of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety of visually challenged students placed in two different educational climates i.e. inclusive and exclusive school settings. This pathetic status of research in the field compelled the investigator to make an attempt in this direction.
1.6 Statement of the Problem

The present research aims at studying the self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety of visually challenged students belonging to inclusive and exclusive school ambience in relation to their scholastic achievement

1.7 Definitions of the Terms Used

Self-Concept:

According to International Encyclopedia of Education- Self-concept can be understood as the relatively stable picture people have of themselves and their own attributes. Saraswat and Gaur (1981) defined it as the individual’s way of looking at himself and it signifies his way of thinking, feeling and behaving. Lawrence (1996) described self-concept as an individual's awareness of her/his own identity. There are three aspects of this concept: self-image (of what the person is), ideal self (what the person wants to be) and self-esteem (what the person feels about the discrepancy between what s/he is and what s/he would like to be). Sanchez and Roda (2003) explained the self-concept as the set of knowledge and attitudes that we have about ourselves; the perceptions that the individual assigns to himself and characteristics or attributes that we use to describe ourselves.

Thus, self-concept is what an individual understands about himself. It includes the individual’s social character, abilities, physical appearance, body image and thinking. It is how one thinks about and evaluates oneself. Development of a favourable self-concept is determined not only by internal factors such as individual’s cognitive and affective
prerequisites but external influences (family, school, classroom environments) also. It varies from one person to another because one sees and understands things differently depending on one’s feeling, beliefs and attitudes.

**Emotional Intelligence:**

Goleman (1995) described emotional intelligence as the capacity to recognize one’s own feelings and emotions as well as those of others. It is the major determinant of human success, and accounts for eighty percent of human performance in life. Mayer and Salovey (1997) conceptualized emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one’s and others’ emotions. Cooper and Sawaf (1997) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, creativity, innovation, cooperation, communication, collaboration, information and influence. Douglas et al. (2004) regarded the emotional intelligence construct as a forum of social effectiveness, a set of skills enabling one to “read and understand others, and utilize such knowledge to influence others in the pursuit of individual and/or organizational goal.”

So, emotional intelligence involves various dimensions. First, one must be able to recognize own emotions and be confident of feelings, accomplishments, abilities as one goes through the world. Second, the ability to distinguish emotions in others, respond empathetically to them, read their social cues. Third, the ability to control one’s impulses, cope with life’s ups and downs and shun displeasure. Apart from this one must be able to handle relationships with others well and motivate others in an optimistic fashion. In fact it is the management of emotions that largely determines human character. Emotionally intelligent people are more likely to succeed in everything they undertake. It helps to
predict success because it reflects how a person applies knowledge to immediate situation.

**Academic Anxiety:**

Singh and Sen Gupta (1986) stated that academic anxiety is a kind of state anxiety which relates to the impending danger from the environments of the academic institutions including teacher, certain subjects like Mathematics, English etc. Academic anxiety is a common issue among students that is associated with academic circumstances such as school environment, class tests, certain subjects and teachers. It is, to a certain extent, unavoidable, necessary, and even productive, as it motivates students to spend time preparing for and taking tests. However, when anxiety elevates the productive level, it often leads to certain problems like concentrating while studying and remembering information while completing tests, which makes the student, feel helpless and failure. If academic anxiety is not properly addressed, it can have many serious and lasting consequences, such as poor performance on schoolwork, failure in examinations, causing a student to procrastinate, withdraw from socializing with peers and pursuing unhealthy academic activities.

**Scholastic Achievement:**

It is the knowledge attained or skills developed in school subjects, usually designated by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers or by both. (Good, C.V., 1973)

Scholastic achievement denotes academic performance of a student at a specialized level of proficiency in academic work as evaluated by teachers using standardized tests and/or teacher made tests.
It is a combination of knowledge and skills which a child acquires on going through a process of formal instruction. Thus it refers to a degree to which a student has encountered success in school and a report of academic progression. This may include grades, grade point average, rank in class, scores etc. which students attain after accomplishment of a course or performance in a class.

**Visually Challenged:**

*Whitmore (1981)* defined visually challenged as individuals whose normal learning and development is impaired by visual conditions and who therefore, need specific conditions and related services in order to develop their abilities.

In educational field visually challenged or blind are those, who are so severely challenged that they must learn Braille to read and write.

**Inclusive Schools:**

These are the schools where inclusive education policy is followed. As mentioned in the Salamanca Report (1994), inclusion refers to provision of equal educational opportunities to all regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or any other disability conditions. It also includes disadvantaged and marginalized groups like street children, working children, children from remote areas, minority groups, and different types of special needs groups and gifted. Sometimes the terms integration and inclusion are used interchangeably while both the terms are different from each other. Integrated schools are those where special need children study with normal children in regular classroom but special teachers provide most of the essential as well as support services to them, whereas general classroom teacher provide additional assistance. In inclusive
school system the education of special need children is treated as integral part of the general education; therefore, essential services are provided by general classroom teachers and only support services are provided by specialist teacher.

In the present study also inclusive schools refer to those schools providing education to special need children with normal peers in general classrooms based on Indian inclusive education policy.

**Exclusive Schools:**

These schools are otherwise may be called as segregated schools or special schools specially meant for the specific group of special need children.

In the present study exclusive schools refer to the special schools meant only for visually challenged children.

**1.8 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To compare visually challenged students studying in inclusive and exclusive school settings on self-concept.

2. To study the difference between self-concept of male and female visually challenged students (irrespective of school setting).

3. To investigate the significance of difference between visually challenged students belonging to both the school systems on emotional intelligence.

4. To compare emotional intelligence of male and female students (irrespective of school setting).
5. To find out the difference between academic anxiety of visually challenged students placed in two school climates.
6. To examine the significance of difference between the level of academic anxiety of male and female students (irrespective of school setting).
7. To study the relationship of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety of inclusive school students with their scholastic achievement.
8. To examine the relationship of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety with scholastic achievement of exclusive school students.
9. To identify the relationship of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety with scholastic achievement for total sample (irrespective of school setting).
10. To study the correlation of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety with scholastic achievement of male students (irrespective of school setting).
11. To investigate the relationship of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety with scholastic achievement of female students (irrespective of school setting).
12. To study the combined impact of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety on scholastic achievement of visually challenged students placed in inclusive schools.
13. To examine the effect of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety on the scholastic achievement of students studying in exclusive schools.
14. To study the pooled impact of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety on scholastic achievement of total sample (irrespective of school setting).
15. To find out the predictive value of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety for scholastic achievement of male students (irrespective of school setting).
16. To investigate the combined impact of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety on scholastic achievement of female students (irrespective of school setting).

1.9 Hypotheses

On the basis of the above mentioned objectives the investigator hypothesized that:

1. There exists no significant difference between visually challenged students studying in inclusive and exclusive school settings on self-concept.
2. Self-concept of male students does not differ significantly from their female counterparts.
3. There exists no significant difference between students of the two school systems on emotional intelligence.
4. Male and female visually challenged students do not differ significantly on emotional intelligence.
5. The level of academic anxiety of students placed in two school settings does not differ significantly.
6. There exists no significant difference between male and female students on academic anxiety.
7. Inclusive school students’ self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety do not significantly correlate with their scholastic achievement.
8. Self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety do not correlate significantly with scholastic achievement of exclusive school students.
9. For total sample self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety do not significantly correlate with scholastic achievement.
10. Self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety of male students do not correlate significantly with their scholastic achievement.
11. Female students’ self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety have no significant correlation with their scholastic achievement.

12. Self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety when combined do not serve as significant predictors of scholastic performance of visually challenged students in inclusive schools.

13. All the three variables i.e. self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety do not contribute significantly to the variance in scholastic achievement of the students placed in exclusive schools.

14. Self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety together do not influence the school performance of the total sample.

15. Similarly male students’ self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety do not contribute significantly to the variance in achievement.

16. Self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety while pooled do not play a significant role in predicting the scholastic performance of female students.

**1.10 Delimitations**

Following are the delimitations of the present investigation:

1. There is a variety of factors that may affect the scholastic achievement of visually challenged students but due to the limited resources and time available only the impact of self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic anxiety has been studied.

2. A composite of scores obtained by the students in different subjects has been employed as a measure of scholastic achievement. Other measures such as standardized tests in different subjects could not be employed because of the paucity of time and resources.
3. The study was confined to the visually challenged students of Delhi only. Other regions could not be included as it was not feasible to the investigator.

4. Modified version of the tools was used by the investigator as suitable tools were not available exclusively for visually challenged students.

5. A variety of statistical techniques is available for analyzing the data but the investigator has employed only t-test, coefficient of correlation and multiple regression analysis.

1.11 Procedure in Outline

The investigator selected a representative sample of the population under study in order to arrive at meaningful generalizations. Various tools were consulted and studied to serve the purpose. Subsequently, three tests were found most suitable for the present investigation for collecting the data; one for assessing self-concept (SCQ), another for emotional intelligence (MEII) and third one for academic anxiety (AASC). The modified version of each tool was administered to the subjects. For measuring the achievement of the students a composite of marks obtained by them was collected from the school records. After seeking the permission from the chairperson of the department, the investigator collected the data. The scoring of all the tests employed was done as per the methods recommended by the constructors of the tool. Then after, the obtained scores were transformed into tabular form for the purpose of analysis. Finally, the analysis of the data was carried out with the help of suitable statistical techniques.
Figure 1.1

Classification of Disabilities (Percentage)

- Seeing: 48%
- Movement: 28%
- Mental: 10%
- Speech: 8%
- Hearing: 6%