CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The development of a nation depends upon the nature and kind of its human resources. All individuals, regardless of their assets and liabilities of personality and potentiality, contribute towards national development. Exceptional children, too, cannot be excluded from this. We find lots of examples of exceptional personalities in history. The sister of former American President, John F. Kennedy, was mentally retarded; the famous writer and traveller, Helen Keller, was blind and deaf. The most famous Indian poet, Surdas, was blind by birth. Albert Einstein’s vocabulary began to develop very late. All these examples prove that compensation of any disability is possible and any disabled child can be made useful for himself and for the nation by giving him appropriate training and learning, like a normal child.

Millions of children in our schools face different problems like language, inappropriate reading skills, memory disorders, problems of attention, problem of comprehension or using language, spoken or written, etc. Such difficulties are termed as learning disabilities. The term learning disability was introduced at a parents’ meeting in New York City by Samuel Kirk (1963). Different educationists, psychologists and committees defined learning disability in different ways (Kirk, 1963; Bateman, 1967; Johnson and Myklebust, 1967; National Advisory Committee on Handicapped, 1969; Task Force-II, 1969, Kass and Myklebust, 1969; Ross, 1977; Siegel and Gold, 1982; Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, 1984; National Joint

Children with learning disabilities exhibit a wide variety of characteristics. The learning disabled children show difficulty in motor development, perceptual ability, memory, language, cognitive skills, attention, maturation in social and emotional areas (Reddy, Kusuma and Jayaprabha, 1999).

Various educationists and psychologists divided learning disabilities on the basis of their problems. The sub-types of learning disabilities are identified as perceptual motor areas, language areas, developmental learning disability, academic learning disability (Kephart, 1960; Frostig and Maslow, 1973; Ayres, 1975; Bateman, 1967; Myklebust and Johnson, 1962; Kirk and Chalfant, 1984; Mckinney, 1984).

In most cases exact causes of learning disabilities remain unknown, but different causes have been identified by different educationists, psychologists and other persons who are involved in these areas. Brain damage, maturational lag or delay, genetic, neurological, perceptual, cognitive, secondary environment, sensory defects, educational, drugs etc. are the main factors which affect the learning disabled children (Naidoo, 1971; Eisenberg, 1966; Keeney and Keeney, 1968; Rabinovitch, 1968; Bannatyne, 1971; Ingram, 1971; Klasen, 1972; Tansley & Panckhurst, 1987; Conners, 1976; Douglas, 1976; Dimond, 1976).

Early intervention should be provided to the children with learning disabilities. After completion of diagnosis and assessment, the
teacher should prepare himself/herself to deal with the learning disabled children. Different practitioners have presented different strategies like Kirk’s (1978) Specialized remedial reading method, Liyod et al. (1982) Behavioural, Instructional and Cognitive approach, Individualizing approach (Stott, 1978; Dyslexia Institute, 1975; Gessert, 1976), Multisensory approach (Thomas, 1977; Hooton, 1976), Structural approach (Hornsby and Shear, 1976; Hooton, 1976), Linguistic approach, Alphabetic approach (Orton, 1966; Sampson, 1976; Gessert, 1976); Whole word methods (Fernald, 1943; Sampson, 1976), Mixed method, Auditory discrimination method, Behavioural modification approach (Hallahan and Kauffman, 1975; Bandura, 1969; Lovitt and Curtiss, 1968; Smith and Lovitt, 1973; Lovitt and Smith, 1972) and Combined or Eclectic approach (Bracht, 1970).

Estimates of the prevalence of learning disabled have varied widely, from 1 percent to 30 percent (Silver and Hagin, 1960; Eisenberg, 1966; The Commission on Emotional and Learning Disabled In Children (CELDIC), Canada, 1970; Rubin and Balow, 1971; Klasen, 1972; U.S. Department of Education, 1987; Stedaman and Kaestle, 1987; Hornsby, 1989; Ramma, 1985; Mukerjee et al., 1995; Radhakrishnan, 1995; Sodhi, 1995; Bains, 1997; Times of India, Feb. 2001).

About 10 to 15 percent of the general school population experience difficulty in reading (Harris and Sipay, 1990). Carnine, Silbert, and Kameenui (1997) suggested that reading difficulty is the principal cause of failure in schools. There are so many other reasons for which the students may leave school before completion of the course. The reasons may be poor background, broken family, poor teaching learning process,
poor reading, writing, spelling, comprehension, arithmetic, inattention, poor self-concept, poor control within the individual etc.

In the present study, learning disability refers to the problems/disorders faced by the students in languages, i.e. reading and spelling. A language disorder is the impairment or deviant development of comprehension and/or use of a spoken, written, and/or other symbol system. The disorder may involve (i) the form of language (phonological, morphologic, and syntactic system), the content of language (semantic system) and the function of language in communication (Pragmatic system) in any combination (Bashir, 1989; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 1992).

According to Spache and Spache (1969) reading is a skill development, a visual act, a perceptual act, a reflection of cultural background, and a thinking process. Harris (1970) assumes that reading is the meaningful interpretation of printed or written verbal symbols.

Some common disturbances found among the reading disabled children are visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, sound blending, memory skills, letter and word reversals, word analysis skills, sight words, interpretive comprehension skills and critical reading skills (Chalfant and Scheffelin, 1969; Gilliand, 1978; Gillespie and Johnson, 1974; Spache and Spache, 1977).

Goodman (1986) and Chiang and Ford (1990) suggested that basal reading approach, literature based reading approach, phonic approach, linguistic approach, whole language approach, language experience approach and individualized reading approach are most important approaches for development of reading ability.
Students who have trouble recognizing words in reading usually have poor spelling skills as well (Carpenter and Miller, 1982; Ekwall and Shanker, 1993). However, some students are able to read words but unable to spell them. Thus, it appears that spelling a word may be more difficult than reading a word. Reading is a decoding process in which the reader receives clues for word recognition. Spelling is an encoding process in which the learner must respond without the benefit of complete visual stimuli. Thus, there are fewer clues.

Teaching methods and strategies are more important for spelling problem children. Rule based instruction, Multisensory approach, Test-Study-Test technique, Study strategies, and Fixed and Flow word lists are useful for these types of children (McNaughton, Hughes and Clark, 1994).

Learning disabled children show a marked discrepancy between intellectual ability and scholastic performances (Hallahan and Kauffman, 1977; Stephens, 1989; Davis, 1994; Hampton, 1996).

Researchers also found no significant differences between learning disabled and normal students on the variable of academic achievement (Kerfoot, 1980; Larmer, 1980; Fouche, 1993; Housley, 1994; Rosenfeld, 2000; Kueny, 2001).

Different researches have also been done on the variable of locus of control. Results show that learning disabled students have high external locus of control and also found learning disabled students have low internal locus of control. The research findings suggested that significant differences were found among learning disabled and normal children on the variable of total locus of control scale (Garabedian, 1990; Brophy,
On the contrary, other researchers reported insignificant differences among the learning disabled and normal children on the variable of locus of control (Hisma, 1976; Snyder, 1980; Tarnowski and Nag, 1989; Morin, 1995; Rukmani, 1997; Harshbarger, 1998; Maxville, Brunello-Prudencio, 2001).

Studies also showed that significant differences are not found among learning disabled and normal children on the variable of self-concept (Calder, 1982; Leggett, 1982; Fouche, 1993; Lewandowski, 1994; Munsie, 1994; Rukmani, 1997; Zubov, 1996; Rosenfeld, 2000; Bordine, 2000; Crossen, 2001; Tatum, 2001; Tardie, 2001).

On the other hand some researchers found learning disabled students having low self-concept and significant differentials were found among the learning disabled and normal children (Totin, 1982; Tiston, 1993; Jarvis and Justice, 1992; Sabornie, 1994; Seymour, 1998; Cohen, 1999; Vaughn, 2000).

Studies show that learning disabled children have normal, average or above, and average or superior intelligence (Kirk, 1963; Association for Children and Adults with LDs, 1984; Bains, 1997).

Differences were not found among learning disabled children and normal children on the variable of intelligence (Mohapatra, 1991). However, differences were found among learning disabled and normal children on the full scale intelligence (Rukmani, 1997; Goldberg, 1983).

So many studies have been done in the field of intervention and remediation of learning disabled children. No such study has been
conducted on the psychosocial problems faced by the learning disabled children.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In a large democratic country like India all children irrespective of their disabilities, social, physical, mental or psychological, have to be properly cared for, nourished and developed adequately. Necessary provisions have been made in the constitution for general education of normal children. But in a country like ours it has not been possible to provide all provisions as well as facilities for all categories of children. There are so many causes that influence the education of children like poor teaching method, poor environment, lack of supervision of the teachers as well as administrators. Another very important factor is the mushrooming growth of educational institutions from nursery to higher education. The quality of education, therefore, has been deteriorating in day by day, due to the loose policies in education. There is no control of the government on the so-called public schools imparting education. The policy of admission too changes from time to time. This leads to unsystematic and poor growth of educational institutions. The teacher-student relation has gone up so high that proper individual attention cannot be paid to all children. So some children do not get the benefit of teaching in the classroom. This results in high dropout of students from schools at early stages.

One of such category of dropouts is learning disabled or learning impaired children. These students are normal in vision, hearing and intelligence. But there is a discrepancy between their ability and achievement. These children have difficulties in one or more specific
areas in language i.e., reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic. Their performance is very poor in specific areas. This results in poor self-concept or self-esteem, poor locus of control, frustration, anxiety, within himself/herself. This leads to problems in school adjustment in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and also lagging behind normal children.

Out of the bulk of researches done on various variables, the researcher decided to investigate the differences as well as relationships of academic achievement, locus of control, self-concept of learning disabled and normal children at three levels of intelligence. It is helpful for the teachers in the classrooms to deal with and provide suitable education to the students, which develops their academic achievement, locus of control and self-concept. Few studies have been done at elementary level, but almost all studies have been conducted abroad.

Thus, serious consideration needs to be given to this significant area so that research can throw more light on those areas where clear cut concepts and evidence are not available. It will also arouse interest and inculcate strength among educationists, professionals and teachers in order to support these students at the early level of education.

In view of the above, the present study has been conceived of and formulated as under.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“A Comparative Study of Academic Achievement, Locus of Control and Self Concept of Learning Disabled and Normal Primary School Students Belonging to Different Levels of Intelligence.”
DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to the constraints of time, resources and other factors, the present study was delimited to:

i) Students studying in class IV and V only;

ii) Only three public English medium schools selected from one town namely Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi District, Orissa;

iii) Only 83 children having learning disability (reading and spelling disability);

iv) The variables of Academic Achievement, Locus of control and Self-concept at three levels of Intelligence;

v) Children having no evidence of sensory, mental or any apparent emotional deficits.

vi) Children having reading and spelling deficits up to one year and above were included in this study.

vii) 83 normal children identified on the basis of students who secured 50 percent and above in all subjects.

viii) Children having intellectually average and above scores.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present investigation took its shape keeping in view of the following objectives:

i) To find out the incidence rate of children with learning disabilities in different English medium schools.

ii) To find out the differentials with respect to Academic Achievement, Locus of Control, Self-concept and Intelligence between learning disabled and normal.
iii) To find out the differentials with respect to Academic Achievement, Locus of Control and Self-concept between learning disabled and normal belonging to different levels of Intelligence i.e. high, average and low.

iv) To find out the differentials on the variables of Academic Achievement, Locus of Control, Self-concept between learning disabled at different levels of Intelligence.

v) To find out the differentials on the variables of Academic Achievement, Locus of Control, Self-concept between normal at different levels of Intelligence.

vi) To find out the class-wise differentials with regard to Academic Achievement, Locus of Control, Self-concept and Intelligence between learning disabled and normal.

vii) To find out the gender differentials with regard to Academic Achievement, Locus of Control, Self-concept and Intelligence among learning disabled.

viii) To find out the relationship between the variables of Academic Achievement, Locus of Control and Self-concept among the learning disabled.

ix) To find out the relationship between the variables of Academic Achievement, Locus of Control and Self-concept among the normal.