2.0 Review of related literature
2.0 Review of related literature

2.1 Total Rehabilitation

2.2 Self-Concept

2.3 Attitude Towards Life

2.4 Parental Perception

2.5 Employed Status Of The Visually Impaired Persons

2.6 Integration of the Findings
The evolution of Disability studies has gained momentum with the Disability Rights movement all over the world. It is slowly gaining importance and emerging with a broader visibility as a subject of academic interest. Despite the growing importance in the field of disability with a plethora of studies and researches carried out in the developed countries the area of rehabilitation of the visually impaired persons still remains grey and unexplored particularly in our country. The field of study relating to the rehabilitation of the blind has not been rightfully addressed in the Indian perspective.

The number of research papers are more in the dimensions of personality, rehabilitation in the Indian context but studies abroad pertaining to education, rehabilitation and personality are much higher. However research studies abroad shows a sharp spurt especially in the field of visual impairments during the period (1985-1986) (fig 2.1). Researches in the field of education is half century old and researches in special education is yet to cross few decades. Researches in special education as a subject of independent development in the literature on educational research is a recent development. In India this area has received attention only in the 90's(Buch,1990). It needs to be mentioned that research work related to visual impairment were relatively small both in India and abroad during the early part of 1980. But over a span of ten years there is a threefold increase in the quantum of research studies in foreign countries whereas the number of Indian Studies still lagging behind(fig 2.2).

The present study tried to explore the Status of Total Rehabilitation and the impact of training of Visually Impaired persons of West Bengal. To be updated with the recent development in the field of rehabilitation of the visually impaired persons in India and Abroad it was imperative to review thoroughly all the accomplished researches
and studies and assimilate them to develop a conceptual framework for the present study. To assess the present status of total rehabilitation the different aspects of total rehabilitation have been incorporated for literature survey. Different theories of Self-concept and Attitude have been included in this chapter considering their relevance to the present study. The Literature review of the present study covers a wide spectrum starting from 1945 to 2008.

The following key-terms were selected for review:

- Rehabilitation
- Self-Concept
- Attitude
- Parental Perception
- Employed Status of Visually Impaired Persons
TABLE: 2.1

Dimensional Analysis of Studies on Visual Impairments in India and Abroad from 1990 - 1996

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<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Visual Impairments</th>
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Figure: 2.1 - A Comparative Graph Showing Dimensional Analysis of Studies on Visual Impairments

Fig. 2.2 - Bar Diagram Showing the Development in the Field of Visual Impairments
2.1 REHABILITATION

The rapid development of rehabilitation has brought new terms and fresh concepts into prominence and has changed the meaning of terms transplanted from other discipline. Definitions differ, however with respect to their process and goal.

Braceland's (1961) definition of rehabilitation takes an all inclusive view of problems and goals. He states that 'a handicapped person has a right to be helped and restored, not only to usefulness and dignity as much as possible, but that he also should be aided in reaching his own highest potential." Kandel (1964) and Oberman's (1965) approach to the rehabilitation problem is similar to Braceland in accepting all types of handicaps. Kandel defines rehabilitation as "that form of therapy which is primarily concerned with assisting the patient to achieve an optimal social role (in the family, on the job, in the community generally) within his capacity and potential." Oberman defined rehabilitation as that activity that is required to assist an individual to move from a state of inadequacy to a status of adequacy", and he pictures the rehabilitants "life space" as a quadrilateral with four sides being medical, psychological, social and vocational. William Gellman defines rehabilitation as the process of improving inadequate goal behavior in work settings. His definition limits the rehabilitation problem to vocational achievement.

The term 'rehabilitant' includes all types of disabled and disadvantaged persons who exhibit a vocational handicap. The definition recognizes the vocational sector touching other life areas and services frequently needed for the rehabilitant to prove his work ability.

An investigation of Rehabilitation Workshop Method which would foster the absorption of the blind workers into the competitive employment was carried out by National Association foe the blind, an
NGO working for the blind in Worli, Bombay (1969). The main objectives of the study was to investigate the improved rehabilitation and training facilities and to understand the employment problems in industry. Except training and trying the trained personnel no other method was tried in the study. The main recommendation of the study were

Purely sheltered form of employment should be discouraged except for the blind with multiple handicaps.

Subcontract workshops, proving training and jobs through production units must be self-supporting.

Agarwal & Sharma (1969) study on Blindness and Blind Welfare in India based on children in three residential blind schools in Delhi identified several short comings related to the rehabilitation program-

Lack of co-ordination among the welfare activities.

Segregation of the blind schools from the society.

Vague admission policies of the blind schools, and inadequate number of schools.

Negative views commonly expressed towards rehabilitation of the blind and visually handicapped.

Severe unemployment of the educated and trained blind persons.

Lack of research in rehabilitation area.

Bhalerao (1975), investigated the family background, education, socio-religious conditions, occupation and economic conditions, recreations and hobbies, bio-medical background and psychology of the educated blind. Results showed that the family adjustments were healthy. All schooling blind children received scholarship and majority
of the samples belonged to the middle economic group. They participated in various recreational program and were also interested in social work. They could keep their homes clean and were self-sufficient in their personal care.

**Martin & Yadav (1979),** conducted a study on Educational and Vocational Rehabilitation of the Blind in Delhi. The aims of this report were to study the educational and vocational training facilities provided by welfare agencies for the blind and the nature and extend of help in vocational rehabilitation offered; to understand the problems faced by the blind individual during educational and vocational training in getting jobs; to know the working conditions and problems of the blinds in employment; the attitude of the employers, colleagues and supervisors towards their blind workers. The findings of the Study revealed that there was inadequate Braille text books, teachers were inefficient and unsympathetic, there was inadequate scholarship grants, along with shortage of 'readers' and 'writers'. There was a demand of better educational standard and job oriented syllabus and better mobility training and need for a provision of recreational activities.

A pilot survey of blind population of one block in Ahmednagar District in rural Maharashtra was carried out by **Louis Braille Memorial Centre, Bombay (1981).** The objective of the study was to ascertain prevalence of blindness in the area under survey. It also aimed to know the socio-economic conditions of the blind in these areas and to find out the extent of utilization of welfare facilities. It was found that there were at least 2 blind persons in per village. 230 blind persons were found in over 106 villages out of which only 7 persons had received training for rehabilitation. Average age at the onset of blindness in this locality was 38 tears.
Kaur, Singh & Jain (1984), made an attempt to study the social adjustment of normal and blind adolescent. The results showed no significant difference among the sighted and blind adolescent in social adjustment.

Vander Kolk & Springfield (1984) indentified 72 successful and 74 unsuccessful clients in a rehabilitation program in order to determine characteristics of success and non-success of the clients in a rehabilitation program. Success was determined by a) acceptance of vocational training,

b) acceptance of a vocational program,  c) competitive placement,  d) other type of closure. Discriminate analysis determined the 5 most powerful predictor variables, which were  a) home management skills, b) unemployment resulting from loss of vision,  c) age over thirty, d) education of high school or better,  e) career maturity, as measured by career maturity Inventory, relating to attitudes and knowledge about work.

Singh & Bandari (1984), tried to Assess the Physical and Psychological distress among the Blind persons. The finding of the study indicates that the blind individuals undergo more physical and psychological stress than the sighted persons. This stress has a bearing on their effective rehabilitation.

Sarita (1985), conducted a comparative study on adjustment pattern of blind and sighted children. The findings of the study showed that overall emotional social and educational adjustment of visually impaired was poor than that of the sighted children.

In a study of 98 blind individuals in North Carolina, Pfouts & Nixon (1982), found that only one third of the samples were working, over 70% had a total family income of less than $10,000. Most employed
subjects were working within State Agency for the blind, in sheltered workshops, or in traditional jobs for blind persons in private sector. They also attempted to determine the relationship between the client characteristics, variables in the labour force, and independent behavior. Those employed were more likely to be male, better educated and have mastered a wide range of independent behavior. They had significantly larger social network. The currently unemployed as opposed to those who were never employed, scored higher in a range of independent skills. The skills included travelling independently, ordering food in a restaurant, shopping alone for clothing, are able to identify one's clothes, reading and writing Braille, using a type writer and tape recorder and signing their own checks.

Other professionals in the field of education and rehabilitation of persons with blindness and visual impairment have made suggestions based on their experiences. Areas identified as needed for successful employment by individuals with visual impairment were- positive self-concept (Ferris, 1991; Lombana, 1980), appropriate social skills (Hatler & Curry, 1987), orientation and mobility skills (Lombana, 1980), and independent living skills (Alonso, 1986; Harrell & Curry, 1987).

Carmen Calvo-Novell (1985) of Spanish National Organization of the blind carried out a research study on the strategies of coping with blindness and visually impairment most often used by adolescents in their social relationships and the efficiency of these strategies. The conclusion of the study was that the group of blind boys and girls self-assess as socially very capable and competent individuals. The study also revealed that the real visual loss causes them to feel threatened with the world of the sighted. The general coping strategies of the group subject of the study was to make cognitive efforts, but they did not make behavioral efforts in order to implement their cognitive
beliefs. Their was a clear discordance between interpersonal and intrapersonal self-concept.

Mathur (1986), study on Appropriate Strategies for rehabilitation of Rural Blind; education of Parents and counseling for visually impaired persons in Bhagwanpur Block, Uttar Pradesh was based on the fact that the Institution based rehabilitation services had not reached even 20% of the blind population and that most of these services were urban based and the services covered school going and adult blinds neglecting the preschoooler and aged blind. The study suggested that it was difficult to provide institution based rehabilitation services since the population was scattered. The study suggested that community based rehabilitation services was cost effective and less time consuming and should be applied under Govt. Sponsorship in the districts.

Rai(1988), conducted a comparative study on Personality Dynamics of blind and sighted higher secondary students. The major findings were:

Blind subjects were less adjusted on the dimensions of family relationships, emotional stability, adjustment to reality, mood and conformity

The sighted children showed poor adjustment on school relationship and leadership.

The adjustment of blind students co-related with interaction with family members, interaction with the sighted, acceptance of blindness and the setting of education. The blind students who had more interaction with the sighted students and family members were found comparatively well adjusted.
Wacker (1988) suggested that achieving independence may be hindered unintentionally in the rehabilitation process. He reports that from 1970 -1988, a large private rehabilitation agency classified approximately 1’600 blind and visually impaired individuals as being job ready, but only 5% went to work and became self-supporting. He believed that the problem may be two fold. Firstly, the rehabilitation system reinforces dependency by stressing the issue of accepting one’s disability within the comfort of the system. Secondly, the subsidized income system is also a disincentive and the rehabilitation system needs the motivation for independence that transcends the disability.

A study to investigate whether impaired students differed from sighted students in occupational self-efficacy, career belief and self-esteem was done by Moore & Paul (1991). Results indicated that visually impaired students self estimation of their ability to complete education required for occupation did not differ from sighted students. Visually impaired students did not differ based on degree of sight loss on measures of occupational self-efficacy, career belief or self esteem. Further more, few differences were found between visually impaired males and females on measures of occupational self-efficacy, career beliefs and self-esteem.

Haider (1991) investigated the adjustment, social competency, aspiration and academic achievement of visually impaired children in special school and in integrated settings. Further it was also examined that how personal and psychological characteristics influence the educational achievement of the visually impaired children in special school and integrated school. The results of the study indicated that visually impaired children from integrated school are better in all respects.
The prime objective of the study conducted by Agarwal (1992) on psychological factors in mainstreaming visually impaired adults was to ascertain the major obstacles involved in mainstreaming the visually handicapped adults in the rehabilitation process. The samples were extensively interviewed with a schedule dealing with their attitude, belief, job satisfaction and adjustment. The study concluded that the characteristic of the individual blind persons is as important as the social atmosphere in which they were placed during the rehabilitation process.

Ajuwon & Paul (1993) studied the quality of life issues of adults with visually impaired in the Nigerian population. Results showed that visually impaired people perceived a diminished quality of life. They also commented on their quality of life in the past and expectations from the future. Overall, female visually adults seemed less optimistic about life than their male counterparts. The study revealed that normal adult’s perception did not differ from visually impaired adults regarding issues of education, employment, leisure and life satisfaction.

Long (1995), discussed results of two focus group meetings that identified housing design features that enhance or limit the everyday functioning of visually impaired persons. Focus group 1 comprised of middle-aged and older visually impaired adults discussed the impact of housing features on cooking, moving about and performing personal care and home activities. Focus 2 comprised of professionals working with visually impaired children discussed activities such as moving about, playing and performing personal hygienic task. Variability in responses to the issue of housing design was attributed to age, degree of visual loss, age of onset, perceived housing needs and attitudes towards the performance of routine tasks.
Jackson & Lawson (1995) investigated Family Environment and Physical distress in persons who are visually impaired. The findings strongly pointed to significant relationships between various characteristics of family environment and levels of psychological distress in the subject. The researcher pointed out that since psychological distress in the subject was presumed to be inversely reflective of adjustment to vision loss, the influence of the family and the social environment served as predictors of adjustment.

Pandey (1995) conducted a psychological study of affection deprivation, ego strength and adjustment among visually impaired children and their rehabilitation. The major findings of the study were:

The deprivation as felt by rural blind children was more acute than that felt by urban blind children.

There was no significant difference in the pattern of affectional deprivation between congenital blind children and partially blind children.

It was found that 10 blind children had ego-strength and poor adjustment.

Rubin, Stanford E, Pusch, Burton D, Fegarty, & Collen (1995), discussed the negative effects of encultured stereotypes on the performance of rehabilitation counselors with clients from minority groups, and identifies educational priorities for promoting cultural sensitivity among rehabilitation counselors. Dominant cultural values and encultured stereotypes affect rehabilitation counselor's selection of helping intervention, interpretation of assessment data from evaluation instrument, development of trust in client-counselors relationships and comfort in working with minority groups. Their lack of awareness of attitudes and feelings affecting the type and quality of services
provided diminishes empathy, misunderstanding and misdiagnosis. Adequate knowledge of available diagnostic instruments is important in yielding unbiased assessment. Rehabilitation counselors educational programs need to focus on the awareness of one's attitude and knowledge about minority groups and cross cultural communication skills.

A study by Waldemar, Klinkosz, Andrzej Sekowski; and Micheal Brambring (2000), on Academic Achievement of sighted versus visually impaired students at Polish Universities analyzed potential between group differences on various personality traits and their impact on academic grades. The results of the study concluded that the level of academic achievement of the students who were blind and those who had low vision was connected, in various degrees, to the analyzed personality variables. It was also found that all students who were visually impaired coped well with their studies and passed their examination on time. The students viewed that University education and the acquisition of knowledge and vocational skills are forms of self-realization. The fact that they were able to study and pass their examination is a sign of successful rehabilitation.

Natilene Bowker (2003) presented a paper on the possibilities for exploring Disability Identity On-Line. The paper discussed how the identities of people with disabilities are dependent on the discursive themes available within the society constructed through social interaction, and how these have an impact upon their self. The study concluded with the following statement that through freedom from the constraints of the physical world (which derive self-worth from physical standard), opportunities offered within on-line environment may provide people with disabilities greater resource to access more empowering identities, and greater resources to participate more fully within the society.
Army L. Silva Smith; Thomas W. Theune.& Panny E. Spaid (2007), conducted a study on Primary Support for Individuals Who are Visually Impaired: Who They Are and The Support They provide. Individuals who are visually impaired require various degrees of support and assistance in their daily activities. This assistance is usually provided by family members, friends who assist the visually impaired persons with all day to day activities. They are termed as 'Primary Support Persons'. Earlier studies (Mcllvance & Reinhardt (2001) have proved that high quality support from family members and friends was associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms among 23, elderly patients of vision rehabilitation service agency. In addition it was found that the high quality of social network was most important for the functioning and wellbeing of the older adults. The findings of the study revealed that the primary support person was mostly needed by the visually impaired persons to provide instrumental support, such as transportation, help with administrative task, shopping and meal preparation. It also revealed that support providers feel mild levels of burden in their role.

Beach, Jefferey D, Robinet, Judy M, Hakim-Larson (2007) studied the relationships among self-esteem, educational level, employment status and three measures of daily living skills(dependence on others, difficulty, and motivation to learn) in 36 adults (aged 20-25) with visual impairments. Participants with higher self-esteem reported receiving help from others less often in performing skills, less difficult with the skills of motivation to learn the skills better than those with lower self-esteem. The relationships found between educational level and self-esteem, and educational level with the three measures of skills and employment status and motivation to learn were discussed.
Lee, Hae-Gyiun; Kim, Jung-Hyun; Kang, Jong-Gu; Daegu University, South Korea-2008 relevant study on The Assessment of Professional Standard Competence of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment wanted to assess the level of competence needed for teachers of visually impaired students. The results of the study confirmed that participants scored higher on the degree of important section than on the degree of accomplishment section which was much lower. The findings of the degree of important section showed that there was no difference between the teachers' educational backgrounds and their experiences. Significant variation of 1% was found in communication, Professional and ethical practice, and collaboration among teacher groups of kindergarten, primary, junior high and high school.
2.2 SELF-CONCEPT

The real self concept is the concept people have of who and what they are. It is a mirror image, determined largely by their roles, their relationships with others, and what they believe the reactions of others to them are. The ideal self concept is the picture people hold of what they would like to be. The changing content of the Self-Concept is a product of both cognitive capacities and feedback from others. Mead (1934) described the Self as a generalized other- a blend of what we imagine important people in our lives think of us. He proposed that a psychological self emerges when the child's I-Self adopts a view of the me-self that resembles others' attitude towards the child. Mead's ideas indicate that perspective thinking are crucial for developing a self-concept based on personality traits.

The two major components of the personality pattern are the core- the "concept of self" and the "traits" which are held together and influenced by the core. Self concept consists of beliefs, hypothesis and assumptions a person has about himself. It is the person's view about himself as conceived and organized from his inner vantage and includes the person's ideas of the kind of person he is, the characteristics that he possesses, and his most important striking traits. (Coopersmith and Feldman, 1974). The different domains of self concept are physical, social, temperamental, educational, moral and intellectual (Saraswat, 1992). Since self concept contains all sorts of information and beliefs that people have about them, it plays a very critical role in the development of the total personality (Smith and Domjan, 2000).

Self concept can be defined as "the perception one has of oneself with regards to different facets of that perception (that is cognitive and emotional) that vary in importance during the person's life (the
evolutional and temporal facet), influenced by social interaction which, in turn is conditioned by the fact that the person belongs to certain social groups (the importance of the social structure); (Rodriguez Cao, 1993, as quoted in Rodriguez et al, 1995). According to Burns (1990), a number of basic factors can be emphasized that contribute towards the formation of a person's self-concept:

- Body image
- Language
- The acquisition of sexual identity and role of gender
- The interpretation of information received from the surrounding environment; how others see me
- Educational practice

A person's self-concept will gradually be reformulated during different stages of development, increasing in its degree of organization, complexity, consistence and stability. One can observe an evolution that ranges from self-concept, based on physical appearance, to a whole system of beliefs that appear in adolescence and a single sense of self discovery. This process continues developing during the person's entire life (L'Ecuyer, 1985).

2.2.1 DIMENSIONS OF SELF

2.2.1.1 - INTERNAL DIMENSION OF SELF

Hall & Lindzey (1970) pointed out in their Self Theory that the term self has two distinct meanings:

a) Attitudes, feelings, perception and evaluations are thought as self as object

b) Thinking, perceiving and doing activities define self as process
The total self as experienced by the individual is aptly termed as the "Phenomenal Self". (Snygg & Combs, 1949; Combs & Syngg, 1959). The Phenomenal Self is the self as observed, experienced and judged by the individual himself; this is the self of which he is aware of. The sum total of all these awareness or perception is his image of himself - his self concept.

The self concept blends together into a unified and dynamic whole. Its parts interact freely yet cohesively with other. Concurrently any given part, or the whole, may be interacting with the external aspects of his phenomenal world. Snygg and Combs (1947) defined the phenomenal world as the individual's perceptual or psychological world. Three principal parts or sub selves of self has been identified. These are self as object (Identity Self), Self -as -doer (Behavioral Self), and self- as -observer and judge (Judging Self).

2.2.1.2 - EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF SELF

The three major sub-selves of the internal dimensions has a dynamic interaction between them. This interaction may be free and easy leading to self enhancement or can be stained, painful and self deliberating. Though these sub-selves occupy the center stage of man's existence there are several other sub-selves as proposed by Sarbir (1952). He opined that all the sub-selves cluster together to form the total self. These sub-selves are external in frame of reference, as opposed to the internal dimensions of Identity Self, Behavioral Self, and Judging Self. Sarbir's sub-selves carry various labels. Similar to the Physical Self, Moral Self, Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self and Social Self.

The degree of stability of the self concept plays an important role in the degree of organization of the personality pattern. Lack of stability
in the self concept may come from important sources but the two most important sources are

i) Conflicting self concepts from the way individuals are treated by significant people in their lives

ii) Instability may occur when there is a marked discrepancy between children's real self concept and their ideal self concepts.

When the individual see themselves as others see them and also as they would like to be, it is difficult for them to maintain a stable self concept. When self concepts are positive children develop traits like self confidence, self esteem and the ability to see themselves realistically. They can then assess their relationships with others accurately and this leads to good social adjustment. When self concept is negative children develop feeling of inadequacy and inferiority. They are uncertain and lack self confidence. This leads to poor personal as well as social adjustments.

2.2.2 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF SELF-CONCEPT

*Self-concept is learned.*

No individual is born with self-concept. It gradually emerges from early experiences and is shaped and reshaped through repeated perceived experiences particularly significant to others. As a result of this individuals perceive different aspects of themselves at different times with varying degrees of clarity. It therefore possesses boundless potential for development and actualization (*Purkey, W.W. & Schmidt, 1988*).

Any experience, which is inconsistent with one's self-concept, may be perceived as a threat. The more these experiences are rigid more the self-concept tries to maintain and protect himself. Emotional problems
are said to arise when the individual is unable to get rid of these perceived inconsistencies.

**Self-concept is organized.**

Every individual maintains countless perceptions regarding one's personal existence, and each of these perceptions is orchestrated with all others. It is stable and organized quality of the self-concept that gives consistency to an individual's personality.

Self-concept resists change and is very consistent and stable. If it changes very often then the individual would lack a dependable personality. At the heart of the self-concept is the self-as-doer, the "I" which is different from the self - as-object, the various "ME's". This helps the person to reflect on his past events, analyze present perceptions and shape future experiences. Perceived success and failures affect self-concept. Failure is a highly regarded area that lowers evaluations in all other areas as well and success is a prized area that raises evaluations in other seemingly unrelated areas.

**Self-concept is dynamic.**

The development of self-concept is a continuous process. In a healthy personality there is constant assimilation of new ideas and an expulsion of old ideas throughout life. Individuals are often seen to sacrifice physical comfort and safety to emotional satisfaction, which shows that self-concept, actually presides over the physical body. Self-concept continuously guards itself against loss of self-esteem, and it is this loss which produces feelings of anxiety. A continuously active system that dependably points to the 'true north' of a person's perceived existence. It not only shapes the ways of a person views oneself, others and the world, but also serves to direct action and enables each person to take a consistence 'stance' in life. The world
and the things are not just perceived; they are perceived in relation to one’s self-concept.

2.2.3 BRIEF HISTORY OF SELF-CONCEPT THEORY

Systematic conceptualization of the self began with William James in the 1890’s which continues till the present. Hamachek (1965); Gordon (1968) and Gergen (1968) treat the theory, nature and dimensions of self in depth. James (1890) described the infant without a self at birth. He suggested that the self develops to become a sum total of “I” the knower or the experiencer, and “Me”, the know or experienced.

Sigmund Freud (1900) brought about a second milestone in the development of self-concept theory that gave a new understanding of the importance of internal mental processes, in spite of the fact that many of his followers hesitated to make self-concept a primary psychological unit in their theories.

Charles Horton Cooley (1902) in considering the meaning of “I” described a social self and labeled it as “the looking self”. Cooley’s basic premise was that the self imagines a perception of itself in the mind of another and this affects behavior. Cooley’s self idea has three basic elements;

a) The imagination of one’s appearance to the other person

b) The imagination of the other person’s appraisal of that person

c) Some kind of self value feeling such as pride or shame

George Herbet Mead (1934) described the features of self conception from the stance of a social integrationist. Meads theory proposed that an individual will conceive of himself as he believes others conceive
him, and that he will tend to act in accord with expectations he projects to significant others. Thus Meads departed from the single notion of self as experienced and placed the emphasis on social interaction as an integral part of the development of self-concept.

Anna Freud in 1946 gave prime importance to the ego development and self-interpretation. There has always been a strong influence of self-concept theory on counseling. Prescott Lecky (1945) was of the opinion that self-consistency is a major motivating force for human behavior. Raimy in 1948 introduced measures of self-concept in counseling interviews and argued that psychotherapy is a process of altering the ways that individuals see themselves.

However, the most influential self-concept theory was that of Carl Rogers in 1947 who introduced an entire system of helping built around the importance of the self. According to him, the 'self' is the central ingredient in human personality and personal adjustment. He described the self as a social product, developing out of interpersonal relationships and striving for consistency. He believed that there is a basic human need for positive regard both from others and from himself. According to him in every person there is a tendency towards self-actualization and development so long as this is permitted and encouraged by an inviting environment. (Purkey & Schmidt, 1987).

The individual here perceives the world in an unique way, which is his phenomenal field and react to the environment accordingly. This phenomenal field consists of both conscious and unconscious perceptions. The 'self', 'me', or 'I' make up the self. The self-concept represents an organized and consistence pattern of perceptions. Although the self changes, it always retains this pattern, integrated, and organized quality to it (Pajares & Schunk, 2002).
Morris Rosenberg (1965) is the main contributor in the rebirth of self-esteem studies in social psychology. He tried to bridge a disciplinary gap with his self-esteem theory based on two factors, namely i) reflected appraisals and ii) Social comparisons. Reflected appraisals mean that human communication depends on seeing matters from other people's perspectives which means the process of taking the role of the other, we become aware that we are objects of others attention, perception and evaluation, thus we see others through the eyes of others. While social comparisons emphasize that self-esteem is in part a consequence of individual's comparing themselves with others and making a negative or positive evaluations (Hughes & Demo, 1989).

John Kinch (1963) offers a general theory of self-concept in one sentence. "The individual's conception of himself emerges from social interaction and in turn guides or influences the behavior of that individual." The Theory suggests that

1) The individual's self-concept is based on his perception of the way others are responding to him

2) The individual's self-concept functions to direct his behavior

3) The individual's perception of the responses of others towards him reflects the actual responses of others towards him.

At present self-concept is a subject of an enormous body of theory and research. Gordon & Gergen (1968) noted that psychology and sociology had accounted for over 2000 publications concerning "self". They have also noted that a large number of variables have been examined in relationship to the self. The self has figured prominently in the theory and research on social control, economic behavior, social deviance, personal aspirations, psychological development,
interpersonal attraction and social influence. Gordon & Gergen had summarized their introduction to this area by categorizing the primary issues as -

1) The self as fact versus construct
2) The self as subject versus object
3) The self as structure versus process
4) The self as single versus multiple

A comprehensive theory was given by Epstien (1973). He felt that self-concept serve two basic functions:

a) Hedonic, that is, to maximize pleasure and minimize pain

b) Structure or integrating, that is, to organize and assimilate the data.

The first function is equivalent to enhancement of self-esteem, the second focuses on the need to maintain the conceptual system and consistency (Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

The self-concept theory by Damon & Hart (1988), proposed that there are systematic developmental trends within each of the physical, active, social and psychological selves. Development in each of these four areas of the self as object is supposed to progress through four stages:

a) Categorical Identification

b) Comparative assessment

c) Interpersonal Implication

d) Systematic belief and plans
Likewise, the development of the self as subject (with its aspect of continuity, distinctness and agency) is also marked by four developmental stages.

a) Categorical Identifications

b) Permanent cognitive and active capacities and immutable self-characteristics

c) Ongoing recognition of the self by others

d) Relations between past, present and future selves (Pajares & Schunk, 2002)

The hierarchical model of self-concept suggest the following distinction of the self (Helmke, 1990). A necessary precondition of the development of a self-concept is the ability to differentiate the self from the surrounding environment; that is to develop a sense of the self as a subject (the existential self). The next development task is to learn the particular attributes that define the self as object (the categorical self).

Kielly & Dorothy (1993) conducted a study to compare the self-concept of teenage learners who are visually impaired and enrolled in public day school with those who attended a residential school. No significant difference was found on the self-concept scale. The results added information to the overall body of knowledge regarding the impact of educational placement on self-concept and relationship between learning medium and self-concept among visually impaired youth.

From the knowledge that was acquired on the development of visually-impaired children, a series of general tendencies can be mentioned that affect these children's development (Warren, 1994; Ammerman,
Van Hasselt, Hersen, 1986; Frailberg, 1977; Ochaita, 1993; Leonhardt, 1992, Díaz-Aguado, 1995) which are noted below:

- A difficulty in making generalizations.
- The major role that adults play.
- The social significance of blindness.
- The perspective of development.

Research into questions of self-concept and visual impairment has centered mainly on comparative studies between people with or without a visual impairment. Of these, following can be highlighted:

- Research that finds lower levels of self-concept in people with a visual impairment (Meighan, 1971; Beaty, 1991).
- Research that finds lower levels for specific areas related to the visual impairment (Obiakor & Style, 1989, 1990; Díaz-Aguado et al. 1995).
- Research that finds a tendency for people with visual impairments to present extreme opinions and attitudes about themselves, both positively and negatively (Jervis, 1959; Zunich & Ledwith, 1965).
- Research using schools as the context for the study, leading to diverse results (Schindele, 1974; Bauman, 1964; Coker, 1979; Head, 1979; Díaz-Aguado et al. 1995; Alexander, 1996).
- Research that finds levels similar to sighted people (Obiakor & Stile, 1989, 1990; Martínez & Sewell, 1996).

Clock-Clampert (1981) had explained the importance of a blind child's self-concept highlighting the fact that manner in which the child learns to view himself has a tremendous impact on his future ambitions, accomplishments and personal happiness.
The difficulties a blind child must encounter in the development of his or her identity are described by Stern (1985) and Inghsholt (1990). Fewer reciprocal and shorter relationships with which to organize his or her world and difficulty from benefiting from the necessary amount of experiences involving high degree of regulated excitement and difficulties when intentional communication is attempted, leads to problems in the development of a progressive understanding of intersubjectivity. It indicates the necessity to stimulate the child through offering him or her a large variety of different experiences with which to create his or her own personal sense of identity.

Goel & Sen. (1985) have reported a few studies which were carried out in the context of personality dimension of the visually handicapped by several students of psychology. The results showed large number of subjects has poor self-concept and emotional stability, below average intelligence and physical dependence. They were found to be fully cognizant of reality and possessed a sense of insecurity. They were rated by their teachers as aggressive, uninhibited, generally group dependent, sociable, predictable and emotionally maladjusted. The blind participants showed less inter individual variance in terms of skills.

Self-concept research on youngsters with visual impairments has yielded mixed results. One perspective has found a self-concept deficit among adolescents who had been main-streamed into public schools (Beaty, 1992). Beaty hypothesized that because of the presence of a visual impairment, participants were prone to feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. These feelings resulted in a self-concept deficit. Other studies have found no such deficits among adolescents with visual impairments (Jervis, 1959; Oblakor & Stile, 1989). One potential cause for such a discrepancy between studies may be the populations from
which the samples were drawn. The studies which found no discrepancy had samples from schools for the blind. In such a setting, participants might be less likely to feel different from their peers.

**Brezelton (1993)** studies on self-concept considers the fact that parental attitudes are fundamental for the child in early years because it represents the aspects which influences the development and consolidation of the child's self-confidence and positive self-concept.

**Waren (1994)** in his research findings highlighted development of a visually impaired child's self concept follows similar step to that of a sighted child, although the visual defect will influence the process. But there is no evidence to prove that lack of vision has a general effect on visual impaired children and that the major roles in development of self-concept are played by body image and language.

A substantial amount of research carried out on self-concept makes use of instruments like: the question “who am I?” life stories or personal autobiographies based on the stories recounted by the subjects involved.

Using L'Ecuyer's “who are you?” method, the study on self-concept by **Ruiz and Esteban (1996)** highlights the fact that, in general, the description blind people make of themselves is very much an inner one, i.e. it is focused on themselves, on their qualities and defects, their aspirations, feelings, interests and abilities, with less emphasis on externally-related assessments, i.e. the things that surround them and that they possess, their relationships with others and their ability to adapt to their surroundings.

**Sewell, Kenneth W. (1996)** examined the self-concept of adults with visual impairments. The study tried to examine the self-concept of
college adults in a setting more readily available. The study also allowed an examination of Tuttle's (1984) notion that sense of competence and similarity to the larger population is reflected in an individual's positive self-concept. The results of the present study suggests that the presence of visual impairment does not necessitate a negative self-concept though there are mixed findings among children and adolescent. The study also offers a tentative conclusion that a negative self-concept does not necessarily follow the individual with a visual impairment into adulthood.

A study conducted by Lalbhadur Singh, Arun Kumar Singh and Asha Rani (1996) on Level of Self Concept in educated unemployed young men in India was based on the following dimension of samples

a) Technical educated unemployed young men in India
b) Non technical educated unemployed men
c) Technical educated employed men in India
d) Non technical uneducated men in India

The results of the study revealed that non technical educated and unemployed followed by technical educated had considerably less positive, though moderate levels of private and social self-concept as compared to their employed counterparts. Nontechnical educated employed also experienced less social conflict than all other groups. It was observed that the employed in general as compared to the unemployed, rated themselves relatively low on nearly all the attributes measuring private and social self-concept.

The study conducted by Uttermohlen (1997) speaks of the risk that the adolescent visually impaired have to face throughout their lives
and that they have to deal with challenges of how to reach a balance between the need for help and the need to regard themselves as competent, independent people and for others also to see them as such.

**Antoniya Zdravkova Andonova Bulgaria (2000)** studied Self-Concept and Social Support of visually impaired persons and sighted adolescents. Undoubtedly a positive reality-based concept of self – an awareness of feeling good about oneself – is perhaps the most precious quality one can gift a child. In many parts of the world today there are excellent integrated and segregated school programs, support services, teacher training programs, vocational training schemes and research on cognitive and developmental growth patterns in the area of visual impairment. Quite a few of those, however, focus on the emotional climate necessary to promote positive, reality-based, acceptable “self” concepts.

The objective of the above mentioned study was to compare self-concept and social support of the visually impaired students' population in Bulgaria with randomly selected groups of normally sighted adolescents. Special attention was given on the effectiveness of the training sessions held, and the usefulness of group counselling of a similar type in the curriculum of the special schools for the visually impaired. The results of the study and their analysis the concluded that:

- The training sessions targeting a self-concept improvement in the context of social skills development in visually impaired adolescents brings in some positive changes.
- The improvement is expected to be much greater if the length of the training period is increased.
The subjects showed real interest towards the training sessions and this can be used as a motif for future work in the field of social skills training lessons in special schools.

The hypothesis that visually impaired children will have higher results on the parent support subscale did not prove to be true, though the study proved that visually impaired have less effective close friends, less effective social contacts, and less mature relationships compared to the sighted ones. The expectance that close friends subscale scores would be influenced by training sessions did prove to be true, thus indicating the possible benefit of implementation of training of similar kind in special schools for the visually impaired.

Rebecca V. Purpura-Go (2000) studied Information Technology Aided Program; Its effects on self-concept Of the Disabled College Students. The study anchored on the Carl Roger’s self-concept theory. The disabled are stereotyped as dependent and helpless and hence have low value about themselves. The study tried to find out whether the disabled persons self-concept changes with the society moving to a new paradigm of information advancement. The study concluded with the following findings:-

➢ Information Technology is an effective tool in improving self-concept of disabled students.
➢ It is more effective on male students than on female students in improving self-concept.
➢ It is more effective on college students above 18 years.

Bhan(2005) tried to ascertain the differences in self-concept of the visually impaired youth and their sighted peers. It was found that there is a significant difference between the self-concept of the sighted and the visually impaired adolescent. The visually impaired adolescent is at a disadvantageous position to compensate for their disability, as
the opportunities provided to them are limited. The sighted adolescents were found to have a more positive self-concept. They were found to be more assertive, less shy, had better ability to acquire knowledge, were more popular in class and had a feeling of over-all wellbeing. Visually impaired adolescent boys were found to have a better self-concept than visually impaired adolescent girls. The visually impaired girls were reported to be frustrated, anxious about their future and were more self conscious in comparison to their sighted peers. The attitude of the family members towards visually impaired adolescent girls was not very encouraging as reported by them. They had a positive self-concept as long as they were in special school setting but when in college among sighted peers their self-concept became more negative. The study revealed the attitudinal change in family and society largely responsible in enhancing the self-concept of the visually impaired adolescent.

A Comparative Study of Self-Concept and Self-Esteem of Blind Students Studying in Integrated School Setting was carried out by Sharma & Mittal (2006). The results showed that students (boys and girls together) from integrated school setting did not differ significantly from their counterparts in special school settings on Global self-concept. Blind boys and Blind girls in two settings also did not differ significantly with their counterparts on total self-concept. On physical, educational, moral, and intellectual dimensions of self-concept also no significant difference were found. However on social and temperamental dimensions of self-concept the two groups differed significantly. Boys and girls in the two groups were compared separately and the results showed that while boys from the two settings differed significantly on social and temperamental dimensions of self-concept the girls were found to be significantly different on any of the dimensions of self-concept. On self-esteem no
significant difference were found between two groups of blind students. Boys and girls in the two settings were found not to be significantly different on this variable.

**Carolyn Palmer (2007)** study on visually impaired children focused on Myths, Stereotypes and Self-Perfection: The Impact of Albinism on Self-Esteem. Albinism has the potential to affect young people both emotionally and psychologically. Their condition is unique and is surrounded by myths and stereotypes. The unusual appearance of children with oculocutaneous albinism draws attention to them and their vision impairment can have an impact on their development of social skills and peer relationships. In addition, social attitudes can affect how they perceive themselves. Evidence from the research literature suggests that for a child to be socially competent he or she needs to have a positive self-concept and demonstrate socially acceptable behaviours. Self-esteem influences a child's interaction with peers, and this influence can be either positive or negative. The study tried to investigate the self-esteem of a small group of students with albinism. The findings indicated that the self-esteem of the participants in this study was generally high.
2.3 ATTITUDE THEORIES

A number of psychological theories have been suggested to explain how attitudes form and why they change. The theories most frequently employed can be categorized as either

a) Learning Theories, b) Consistency Theories  c) Cognitive Response Theories

2.3.1 LEARNING THEORY

Doab (1947) suggested that learning principles could be applied to attitudes. He proposed that the principle of classical and instrumental conditioning could be used to explain the formation and change of attitudes in much the same way that they have been applied to overt behavior. In classical conditioning on successive occasions, a neutral stimulus is paired with an unconditional stimulus. Over time, the previously neutral stimulus elicit response similar to that produced by the unconditioned stimulus. Objects, people or events associated with pleasant experiences may take on favorable evaluation, while those associated with unpleasant experiences may be evaluated negatively. Instrumental conditioning, in which the reward consequences, of any behavior shape its subsequent enactment, is obviously relevant to attitude formation and change. Credit for demonstrating the potential of the instrumental conditioning of attitude is given to Greenspoon (1955) who used verbal rewards to alter what people said.

2.3.2 CONSISTENCY THEORY

A second group of attitude theories focuses on the individual's attempt to maintain consistency among numerous attitudes one holds. The most influential of this theory is the balance theory-
In its simplest form, this theory involves the relations between a person and two attitude objects. The three elements are connected by either favorable attitudes or unfavorable attitudes. The structure formed by the relations among the elements may be balanced or unbalanced. In general, a balanced state is one in which the elements fit together harmoniously. Many studies have demonstrated that people express a preference for balanced structure and fill in incomplete structures in such a way as to maintain balance. Nevertheless, most of us do hold inconsistent attitudes. Balance theory does not predict that imbalance will always be resolved - only that there is a tendency towards balance and that unbalance structures produce tensions and discomfort.

In 1957 Leon Festinger published his theory of cognitive dissonance. Like balance theory, the focus of cognitive dissonance theory is on individuals, who are assumed to strive for harmony (consonance) among the elements in their cognitive or thought structure. For Festinger, any two related cognitive elements will be dissonant if they do not fit together because they violate general logic or the person's expectations. The amount of dissonance created depends upon the importance of the elements to the person and the extent to which the elements do not fit. The magnitude of dissonance increases as importance and lack of fit becomes greater.

2.3.3 COGNITIVE RESPONSE APPROACHES

This theory focuses on the fact that the recipient does more than to react to the extend information; the recipient also generates thoughts about the information. These thoughts increase, neutralize, or even reverse the intended impact of the information. Greenwald (1968) gave the label cognitive response analysis to these approaches suggested that when people receive a persuasive message, they relate the
information in the message to their existing store of knowledge. Cognitive response approaches also emphasize the role of the person's cognitive organization in determining how information's is interpreted, remembered and retrieved.

2.3.4 ATTITUDE TOWARDS DISABLED PERSONS

McCollam (1949), reports that the attitude of the blind towards the society may be of:

1) Envy, often manifested in antagonism and resentment

2) Impatience growing out of the inability of the sighted to understand their situation

3) Demands for special benefits and services.

McCollam noted the tendencies of the blind individuals to blame the society for the condition responsible for their disability. In the same study blind persons employed in Industry were found to develop no special attitudes towards the sighted co-workers that constituted an inference with vocational adjustment.

Klien (1949), felt that healthier attitudes will be achieved as we reduce the segregation between the blind and the sighted. It was suggested that helping the blind person to reconstruct his self-image could help him to develop positive attitude.

Gravitz (1954), study explored the social participation of the blind indicating that they were comparable to the sighted with respect to the amount of social participation, however their interaction, involves other blind people to a much greater extent.

Lowenfield 1952) had pointed out that historical precedents are responsible for regarding blind persons as liabilities of the society.
Studies of the past (Hanks & Hanks 1948) records that negative attitude towards disability were more evident in authoritarian countries. Negative attitude towards blindness seems to also prevail in economically developing countries where disability is considered as economic liability. In an important study conducted by Simon(1949) it was found that the sighted population is far from unanimous in its attitudes towards blind persons but better informed than expected. Young educated blind tend to have more positive attitude than the others.

All persons believe that their body and the 'person' are one and the same. For any person the visible appearance assumes a major role, not the invisible personality. A person's conception of his own body has a great deal to do with his conception of his own personality and his relations with other people, hence when he sees a handicapped individual, his body image about that person becomes distorted and this becomes the source of the attitude of rejection. Another source of negative attitude lies in the ignorance of the primary cause of disability. Freud explains that a child's immature psychological development prevents him from recognizing or making a sharp distinction between objects that are parts of his own self and those which are not.

Other sources of attitude for a common man lies in the religious scriptures, literatures and folklores. The holy Bible mentions that the sins of the parents will be visited upon their children in the third and fourth generation. The Manusmriti depicts a crippled individual as a sinner of his past life. Dr.Kessler says "Perhaps, the greatest disservice has been performed as definite stereotype. From Dickens down to the novelists of the present day, writers have been guilty of creating this false picture, an image which cannot be dislodged with difficulty from the mind of the average man." It can be said that this attitude still
exists because the reflection of society’s depreciating attitudes towards the blind is to be found in the fact that comparatively very few studies have been undertaken to study attitudes of the blind towards the sighted and their attitude are not of crucial significance to the society. Whiteman & Lukoff (1961), found that attitudes towards blindness as a condition and towards blind person as individuals are associated with selected personality variables. Negative evaluation of blindness tend to be expressed by persons who perceive this world as an unfriendly place, describes themselves as distant from others, or identify themselves strongly with power.

Bateman (1962) supported the distinction that “blind children are their own best salesman” by his research findings. The results of his research findings showed that persons who had known blind children judged their abilities more positively, and that these judgments became even more favourable as the number of blind children known, increased. Children from the urban communities were more positive in their attitudes than those in the rural communities.

Since the impaired people are perceived by normal people as “different” the prevailing view is that they tried to be classified as deviant from majority and are forced into an “inferior” social position with negative evaluation given to other minority groups. Associating disability with minority group status has the potential of stigmatizing the person with disability. Certain undesirable quality qualities are attributed to disabled people, merely because they are physically impaired. Gellman (1959) suggested that when society defines a person’s role deviant, that evaluation results in a self definition of inferiority leading to a marginal role in the society.

Confounding the idea that disability is associated with negative evaluation has been the finding that in measuring attitudes towards
people with physical disability, publicly expressed attitudes are generally positive (Comer & Pilivin, 1975). The probable reason for this may be due to the fact that while verbalizing public attitudes people usually do not express negative feeling. This tendency is referred to as a social desirability bias and has been found in studies of attitudes towards disabilities (Feiberg, 1967).

Trying to understand the impact of societal attitude one may raise the question, "Is there a common stereotype of a person with disability?" Siller and Chipman (1965) correlated general attitude towards physical disability with attitudes towards specific types of disabilities. The correlation were significant, leading Siller and Chipman (1965) to conclude that able bodied people do hold stereotypical attitudes towards disabilities. Whiteman and Lukoff (1964, 1965) have studied attitudes towards blindness. They found that whereas blindness was most negatively evaluated type of disability blind people in general were favourably evaluated, that is, seen as socially competent.

To explore the possibility of adjustment of blind men in different areas of their personal and social life Saroj Patkar (1966) found that the majority of the respondents had accepted their disability though they had difficulty in adjustment in their occupation. The satisfaction of their occupation and family life had great influence in achieving well adjusted personal life.

A similar study was conducted by Vinita Tombat (1968) from College of Social Work, Bombay, on Physical and Social Adjustment Of Blind Women who stayed in Special Institution The study revealed that most of the inmates came from poor families where they were regarded as a liability hence family ties were lost and they felt rejected and therefore had difficulty in adjustment. The study also indicated that most of them did not attach much importance to friendship, thus showing the
tendency of withdrawal. Most of the respondents wanted to get a job to be independent and earn their own livelihoods. Further some felt that vocational training they underwent was of little use as it did not help them to find a suitable job.

Lulla Mani (1970) of College of Social Work Bombay, tried to assess the causes of blindness and their reactions and attitudes towards blindness which reflects the attitude of the blind individuals and the influence of the society's attitude towards them. The finding of the study showed that blind individuals felt depressed and insecure with their impaired state when they received help from their family or others, some felt sorry and some felt grateful, some felt hostile and apathetic. They also felt that the society does not care for blind persons. With reference to special privileges received by the blind most of them disagreed that the blind are more fortunate than the sighted. Majority felt that blindness was a result of past deed which seems to be an indication of deep down rejection and denial of their handicap. Most of the respondents of the study felt that the blind individuals are as independent as the sighted, thus showing that the handicapped persons are capable of overcoming their limitations.

A group of psychologists namely Hasan.G; Khan S.R & Khan M.W (1983) published their research work in Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology. The purpose of this study was to understand how life of the blind appears to the blind and the sighted persons. Eight incomplete sentences formulated to elicit different kinds of information about the life of the blind were presented to a group of 56 blind and an equal number comparable group of sighted adolescents. The content analysis of the responses showed that the blind does not rate life as much negative as it is rated by the sighted.
Das (1988) tried to ascertain the psycho-social profile of blind adolescent girls. The emphasis was on their institutionalized girls not living with their parents. Results indicated that subjects were favorably oriented towards their family, though at times they also reflected an ambivalent or a sort of duality or a confused state of mind attitude. They were most comfortable with their blind friends, and the relationship with sighted peers was superficial. They sensed the deprecating and condescending attitude of the society pretending to be caring sometimes angered them. They did not consider marriage a necessity though they were confident that they would be able to successfully cope with the responsibility which accompanied marriage.

Different studies have indicated that blindness has a measurable social stimulus value. This signifies that people form opinions and maintain attitudes about blind persons based on the fact of blindness, in the absence of any other information about them. This type of attitude of the society affects the blind person's psychological adjustments.

Nalida E. L. Besson (2002) in her Article on 'Attitudes And Policies on Blindness /Visually Impaired And Braille Literacy' tried to explain that "the real problem of blindness is not loss of eyesight. The real problem is the misunderstanding and lack of information which exists. If a blind person has proper training and opportunities blindness is only a physical nuisance." Attitude towards people who are disabled in general tend to be negative. Negative attitude, perception and prejudice are some of the factors that cause poor public policies. They often affect the kind of rehabilitation and job training blind people receive. They sometimes also affect the way other people relate to and treat blind individuals and these factors in turn affect the attitude of the blind about themselves and the society they live in.
2.4 PARENTAL PERCEPTION ABOUT THEIR DISABLED CHILDREN

Parental attitude influence the way parents treat their children and their treatment of their children in turn, influences their children's attitude towards them and the way they behave. Hence the parent child relationship is an important factor in determining the child's attitude towards life. If parental perception is favorable, the relationship of parent and children will be far better than when parents' perception is unfavorable. Many cases of maladjustment in children as well as in adults can be traced to unfavorable early parent child relationship which develops due to parental attitude cloaked in behavior suggesting favorable, but were unfavorable in real situations. The importance of parental attitude on family a relationship comes from the fact that once formed they tend to be persistent. The unfavorable attitudes of the parents tend to persist in the parent child relationship even in adult years.

2.4.1 SOURCES OF PARENTAL ATTITUDE

Several factors influence parental attitude towards their wards.

- The dream child concept formed before child's birth which is highly romanticized and based on what parents would like their child to be. When the child falls short of these expectations their disappointment encourages the development of rejecting attitude.

- Parental attitude also develops from the early experience the parents had in their own life.

- Cultural values about the best way to treat children whether in an authoritarian, democratic or permissive way will influence parental attitude and treatment towards their own children.
• Parents who enjoy the parental role and are happy and well adjusted to their marriage reflect a favorable attitude towards their children.

• When parents feel adequate in their parental role, their attitude towards their children and the children's behavior are more favorable than when they feel inadequate and unsure of how to bring up their children.

• Parents who are satisfied with the character and gender ratio of their children, have more favorable attitude than parents who are dissatisfied.

• The ability and willingness to adjust to family centered pattern will determine how favorable parental attitude towards the child who have made this shift in the roles essential.

• Parents who have the child to hold their faltering marriage have a positive attitude.

• Parental attitude develop the way the children interact and react with their children.

2.4.2 SPECIFIC FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENTAL PERCEPTION

All individual have their own values and experiences to a particular situation and parenting is no exception. In addition, because the meaning of parenthood is so deeply involved with all aspects of personality (Ware, 1981), the birth of a handicapped infant can challenge an individual's basic system of values, beliefs, and trust, as well as his sense of control over his own life. How that individual responds to the situations will depend on his or her strengths and weaknesses, the help given by other family members (Wills, 1979) and by professionals and the influence of many different factors.
Parents are frequently said to go through certain stages like sorrow, despair or depression as they come to terms with the child's handicapped condition. While this theory is frequently used to describe parents' emotional and coping status along an imaginary continuum of acceptance, there is little empirical evidence that parents of handicapped children actually go through these stages.

**Schell (1981) and Marion (1981)** have stated that severity of the child's handicap often influences the perception and feelings of parents. The more severe the handicap, the less social acceptable it is. Parents of blind and visually handicapped children may be particular vulnerable to such social pressures since many eye disorders are accompanied by obvious physical manifestations. **Schell (1981) and Marion (1981)** had also observed that the higher the socio economic status of the family, the more adverse the reaction will be at the birth of the handicapped child. Parents of all socio-economic levels share similar feelings about the birth of a handicapped child, but some feelings may relate directly to the value placed by adults on childhood and on the development of children into responsible adults (Umansky, 1983).

**Mori (1983)** is of the opinion that, the older a child is when the handicap is diagnosed, the more difficult it is for the parents. The process parents of older children go through may be difficult as the family may have developed dreams and goals for the child which may need to be fundamentally altered. The manner in which parents are first told about their child's handicap can also influence parents behavior (Mori, 1983) which makes the parents enter into a situation of anxiety and generate an atmosphere of hope, fear and uncertainty which has a profound effect on their views about the child's handicapped condition. The financial stress on already overburdened
families rises concomitantly with the birth of a handicapped child (Moroney, 1981).

The method used in handling children and the attitudes and perception underlying these practices appear to show consistent relationships to the personality and behavior problems of the children. Specifically, such problems are related to parental over-protection, rejection (Freud 1938; Levy 1930; Auchhorn, 1935). On the basis of review on 45 studies in the monograph "Maternal Care and Mental Health," dealing with the effects of institutionalization on child’s personality Bowlby (1952) derived at the following notion—"The evidence is now such that it leaves no doubt regarding the general proposition that prolonged deprivation of the young child of maternal care may have far reaching effects on the character and so on the whole of his future life." Hence a sound parent child relationship is an important indicator to healthy development of the child’s personality

Studies conducted by Brown, Morrison & Couch (1947); Kasanin Knight, & Sage (1934); Newell(1934); Roberts & Fleming (1943);Symonds (1939) , using different techniques have proved that unfavourable relationships with parents are co-related with the child’s maladjustment.

Studies to investigate parent- child relationships in terms of interpersonal attitudes and behavior have been conducted by Anderson,1940; Chempney,1941; Lawa,1927; Long, 1941; Myers,1935; Baldwin, Kalhorn, & Breese, 1945). The findings of the studies indicate that patterns of parent’s behavior and attitude are related to behavioural reactions and personality characteristics in the child. Children of actively rejectant parents were less cheerful than other groups and children of democratic- acceptant parents were higher than children from all other groups in terms of sociability.
Becker, Peterson, Hellmen, Shoemaker,&Quary (1959), Pech(1958), using Fels Scale indicated:

1) Dictatorial and thwarting parental attitudes are associated with conduct problems such as aggressive and uncontrollable behavior.

2) Parental attitude variable like trust, democratic orientation, severity of control as well as internal consistency of family life relate to personality characteristics like social conformity, spontaneity, hostility, friendliness and ego strength in the adolescent. Studies done by Sears, Maccoby and Lewin had shown similar trend in their findings.

Summers (1944) using intuitive approach categorized five reaction patterns in the behavior of the parents towards their handicapped child:

- Acceptance of the child and his handicap
- Denial of the effects of the handicap
- Over protectiveness
- Disguised rejection
- Overt rejection

The denial reaction corresponds to the parental attitude category which was further explained by Kanner (1957) in his study as "perfectionism". Parents who have attitude that the visual handicapped child has no limiting effects are liable to expect from the child more than is realistic. They may adversely effect the growing child's self-concept because he may not be able to meet their expectations. These parents often try to make self-sacrificing efforts for their child just to prove that visual handicap is no obstacle.
Summers (1944) found out from her research study that co-relation exists between the attitude of the parents and the adjustment of their blind child along the dimensions of general adjustment to school and adjustment to their handicapped condition. The finding suggests that adjustment is generally related to parental attitudes and that mal-adjustment arises from social attitudes, especially of parents, rather than blindness itself. The adjustive mechanism of the children to the five parental reactions are found to be:

Compensatory behavior

Denial reaction

Defensive reaction (projection, rationalization)

Withdrawl reactions

Non adjustive behavior reactions.

Summers had considered the last two reactions as maladjustment.

Champney (1941) proposed the following hypothesis-

1) Parents behave with sufficient consistency to differentiate themselves from other sets of parents

2) Characteristics of parents behaviour are related to the adjustment of their children

These hypothesis were confirmed by subsequent empirical study. While Summers’ and Marshal’s work extends the plausibility of the relationship between the parental attitude and maladjustment of the children to the area of visual disability, their findings were weakened by limitations in designs and methodology in the two studies.
**Langford and Alm (1954)** in their comparative study of parents judgments on their feelings, ideas and concept of their children used the word “understanding”. The finding of the study reveals the fact that parents are more understanding regarding their child’s feelings related to areas of social adjustment than in areas related to self adjustments.

The study presented by **Jourard (1955)** states the following findings. Self-appraisal is significantly related to a person’s perception of his parents’ appraisals about him. Subsequently feeling of insecurity is significantly associated with negative self appraisal and perceived negative parental appraisals.

**Lee (1964)** showed from his research study that socialization of a blind person depends on the evolving social relationships within the family structure where the family can be designed as a basis for love, responsibility and duty. The degree with which a family copes with a handicapped child not only effects the future development of that family unit but also the adjustment level of the blind individual in the larger society.

**Studies by Lowen, Underberg, Verrillo & Benham** on adjustment of visually disabled adolescent found that

There was no difference in adjustment levels between the visually handicapped in living in home and residential school, with the sighted adolescent.

- A tendency of better adjustment to be associated with visually disabled adolescent living at home.

- Residential males were better adjusted than residential females.
There was no difference among the mothers of the three groups with respect to publicly expressed attitude.

There was no relation between positive maternal attitude and good adjustment in the child.

The mother of a severely handicapped child may well be subject to consider physical and emotional strain; the early mother-child relationship may be in risk of being disturbed. The consequence of affectionate acceptance of the child as he is, may well be crucial in helping him to capitalize on subsequent educational and social opportunities. This appears to be particularly relevant to his later development if such insecure acceptance has its sequel in the provision of a reasonably stimulating and interesting environment which encourages exploration and discovery.

The research studies of Norris, Spaulding & Brodie (1957) had concluded that favourable opportunities including security within the family and in the understanding of the child's special needs are benign conditions in the absence of which there may be enduring detrimental effects on both the educational success and the personality development of the visually impaired child.

Wills (1965) stated that a child lacking a major sense such as vision would understand his world later and in a different way from a child with full sensory equipment. The need to handle, fondle and talk to the visually handicapped baby is crucial; in the early days after birth the physical presence of the mother giving love as well as food should be experienced.

Lata (1985) reported the impact of parental attitude on social, emotional and educational adjustment of normal and handicapped students. The objectives were 1) to investigate the different parental
attitude toward the normal and handicapped school students, 2) To study the difference between normal and handicapped students in adjustments, 3) to find out the difference between the normal and handicapped students in the field of social, emotional and educational adjustments, 4) to trace the effects of the attitude of parents on the adjustment of normal and handicapped students.

The findings showed:

The parental attitude did not differ for normal and handicapped students

Normal children showed a significant difference from handicapped students in adjustments

Normal boys and handicapped girls showed better emotional adjustment than normal girls and handicapped boys

Normal students did not differ significantly from the handicapped students in the field of social adjustment

Normal students differed significantly from handicapped students in the field of educational adjustments

The attitude of the parents affected significantly the adjustment of handicapped girls but did not effect the adjustment of the handicapped boys.

A comparative study was conducted by S.R Mittal, NIVH (1988) to compare the family set up of visually handicapped and sighted subjects as perceived by them and investigate various mode of behavior in the family. The findings indicate that the mode of family’s behavior ranged from rejection to over protection, over indulgence and communication difficulties.
A study conducted by John Mc Connell (1988) tried to determine the effects of a parent guided program on adolescents' career decision and plans, communication between parents and adolescent, and the importance of work roles for adolescents with visual impairment.

The perception and expectation that people have about visual impairments can have a significant negative effect on the personal and social development of people who are visually impaired (Scott 1969). Parents of children with visual impairments tend to expect less of them, which may lead to the children's lesser accomplishment and slower development (Warren, 1984). Over protection, over assistance, denial and negative parental attitudes may inhibit visually impaired children's development of initiative, independence and realization of their abilities. (Farrell, 1985; McBroom, Tedder, and KangJi 1992, Tuttle 1984; Warke, 1993). Parents' aspirations and expectations profoundly affect the career choice behavior of both disabled and non-disabled young people. The finding of this study suggests that a structured career exploration program that includes parents in a viable method to consider as part of a transition plan for students with visual impairments. Parental involvement does not replace specialized placement and counseling sources. Studied that include parents over longer period may provide more information about the optimum times for parental involvement and clarify parents roles in helping adolescent with visual impairment explore possibilities for careers.

Elhadidi, et al. (1994) studied the stress experienced by families of children with mental retardation, hearing impairment and visual disability and physical disability. Findings revealed statistically significant difference between families of disabled children and families of non-disabled children. It was also revealed that among families with disabled children, those with mental retardate children were experiencing the largest amount of stress followed by hearing
impaired, those with physically disabled and lastly those with visually impairment.

**Mc-Connell, et al. (1994)** studied to investigate a program model in which parents and adolescents examine personal values career decisions and plans. The results indicated that students in both experimental groups confirmed their career choices and became more aware of personal career values. The effects of the program in career development of adolescent with visually impaired and the importance of parent student communication were positive.

An exploratory study to examine the relationship between the mothers parenting style and the visually impaired young adults was examined by **Cardinali, Gina & D'Allura, Tana (2001)**. Findings indicated that both young adults and their mothers reports on the parenting style were related to self-Esteem of the visually impaired persons.

**Ashun Gupta and Nidhi Singhal (2004)** studied the Positive Perception in Parents of children with disabilities. It is primarily addressed towards understanding and measuring the negative attitude and adverse consequences of having a child with disabilities. The study tried to take a step forwards and focuses on the cognitive processes as a result of experiences of a traumatic event. The researcher moved away from the negative outcomes and highlighted the process of developing positive perception in these parents. The focus was on the process of coping that generates positive perception and the ways that these perceptions are used as an effective coping strategy. From the study it was revealed that positive perception plays a central role in the coping process and assists us in dealing with the traumatic and stressful events. Not only do they benefit the parents and the siblings in coping with the child, and the disability and the difficulties associated with it, but also help the family unit as a whole.
The way in which the family functions, is influenced by the parents' perception of their child's difficulties. Parents with positive perception can help the other parents in the early stages of adjustment develop positive but realistic outlook.

Moira E. Stuart, Lauren Lieberman, & Karen E Hand (2006) investigated on the value the parents placed on their children's physical activity and the barriers to physical activity the child faced. Significant findings revealed a positive but moderate relationship among several parent-child variables. There was a positive relationship between children's expectation for success and parents' expectation for success. A positive relationship was also found between the children's value for physical activity and the parent's expectation for success. A significant and positive relationship was found between the children's own value and the children's expectation for the ability to engage in regular physical activity.

A similar relevant study was conducted by Jeryder and Gnanajanel (2007) to examine the various dimension of family stress faced by the parents of disabled children. The study revealed that families with disabled children need help in diverse aspects to care for the child and to cope with stress. The coping abilities of the families are the key features that help individual maintain psycho social adaptation during stressful period. Family relationship patterns, interpersonal skills, and social and psychological characteristics create a sense of positive family identity, promote satisfying interaction among members and contribute to the family's ability to deal effectively with the child.

An Exploratory Study on Parental Involvement in the Development of visually handicapped children was conducted by A. Minikutty (2008). The study attempted to find out the levels of parental involvement in the education and training of visually impaired children. The
relationship between level of parental involvement and academic achievement was also studied. The results revealed that the level of parental involvement is high in the development of daily living skills, domestic skills, orientation and mobility. Parental involvement level is low in the development of vocational skills. The study concludes that there is significant positive relationship between levels of parental involvement and academic achievement of the visually impaired children.

A relevant study of the present research work, was conducted by Umadevi and Sukumaran (2008) to find out the awareness of parents of children with mental retardation on the PWD Act (1995). This study also attempted to analyze the awareness of parents with respect to gender education and occupation. According to this study majority of the parents are not reasonably aware about the major provision of the act. The finding further indicated that gender, education and occupation of parents of children with disability are not significant predictors of parental awareness. The high level of ignorance of parents regarding Persons with Disability Act (1995) indicated there is a need for well organized parental awareness generation program.
2.5 ECONOMIC AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Unemployment of the disabled people is the frontier that must be conquered in the present century if these people are to be fully integrated into the society. The years of late adolescence and early adulthood are periods of questioning for decision making and for assumptions of new responsibilities. There is a shift for transition from the role of student to that of worker. A “Worker” may be broadly defined as one who exhibit goal directed behavior aimed at accomplishing something \((\text{Bagley, 1985}; \text{Hoyt, 1985})\). Bagley (1985) further defines career development as “The process through which individual defines their work values and create meaning for their activities. It also involves exploration of interests and discoveries of potential”. Hoyt (1985) also emphasized that career development is a ‘process’ not a program. It is developmental in nature and includes such components as career awareness; career exploration ;career planning; career decision making; career preparation; career entry and career progression.

A project by Ramkrishna Mission. Narendrapur, (1969) was to examine the possibility of placing the blind in industries on a competitive basis and to develop training techniques for the purpose. The report concluded that placement was possible in medium sized industries and in jobs of repetitive nature. Employers certified that the productivity of the blind workers were at par with that of the sighted workers on the same or similar kinds of jobs. Industrial training resulted in confidence and job flexibility and all the blind employees were well integrated with their families and colleagues.

A survey of identifying occupation for the physically handicapped was conducted by the Director General of Employment and Training Ministry Of Labour, Govt. of India in 1970. The major objectives of
the survey was to explore occupations (industrial) for a) Visually impaired, b) Hearing and Speech impaired, c) Orthopedic handicapped. The survey came up with the following suggestions:

i) Counseling services leading to productive adjustment

ii) Study required of physical capacity, psychological make-up and aptitudes, compensatory modes of behavior (adjustment training)

iii) Careful matching of the assets of the handicapped with the job requirement to maximize productivity

iv) Special on the job training

v) Follow-up work

A study conducted by P. Ramachanaran and Pandiarajan, (1971) tried to explore the possibilities of securing a job by training the blind as physiotherapists. The study found that it is difficult to completely train a blind physiotherapist and expect him to be medically and logically responsible for all activities.

Bhaleras (1975) tried to ascertain the state of educated blind of Madhya Pradesh in the employment market. The results showed that out of 100 respondents 83 were employable of which 3 persons had a suitable job in relation to their educational qualification. 30 persons were unemployed and 16 held part-time or ill-suited jobs. Those educated blind working as teachers preferred to be engaged in this profession as it involves more oral communication than written work. The study showed that a class of educated blind are emerging bringing with it problems of unemployment and underemployment and during the recent years this number has increased considerably.

The American Foundation for the Blind conducted a study to identify barriers that rehabilitation professionals experience when providing
services to persons with visual disabilities (Link, 1975). Seven barriers to placement and employment include (a) caseloads that are too heavy and overemphasize case closures; (b) increasing numbers of consumers with multiple disabilities; (c) over-utilization of segregated employment settings; (d) personal, social, and vocational skill deficits in people with visual disabilities; (e) lack of understanding of employment options and demands; and (f) financial work disincentives.

Guha and Anand (1980) tried to investigate to probe into the possibilities blind working independently on more difficult task with the help of certain accessories. The results showed that the blind individuals are capable of doing difficult task independently with the help of accessories provided for them.

Baxter & Young (1980) conducted a six-country survey in Mississippi of high school graduates, high school seniors, administrators and personnel directors of 97 companies. The purpose of the study was to determine the level of need for certain skills, related to employee attitude, communication and basic knowledge predominates. Attitudes, including dependability, getting along with others, staying with a task until completion and recognizing the importance of good health, received the highest rating of importance. Employers felt that a majority of specific skills and all the attitude areas needed more emphasis in school.

Preparing individual with disability for employment is a multifaceted problem. Vandergoot (1982) suggested that work readiness is determined by an interaction of personal attributes and the environment. Personal attributes include skills, behavior and psychological traits of the individual and the environment factors include labour market conditions, attitude of employers and inappropriate or inadequate vocational and educational training.
Individuals with disability have been unemployed or under-employed in the work force. Haveman & Wolfe (1990) reviewed the economic status of disabled people from 1962-1984. They concluded that gains were made to the mid seventies both in the percentage of employment and real earning power after which the trend gradually declined.

The effectiveness of Alabama's system change training program was evaluated by Browning & Foss, (1983) using the Training Evaluative Kit (TEK). The evaluation method intended to provide trainers with a demographic profile of all training participants, a measure of the trainees' perception of the accomplishment of training objectives, and the degree to which the training program was successful in impacting change within each training participants. TEK included the evaluation of both participants and trainers objectives, since they might not be the same. Preferably there would be a high correspondence between the 2 sets of objectives, which would be interpreted that participants are attending training that meets their expected needs and interests. Training outcome results, as measured by the TEK system, indicated that that trainees had moderate and much informational 82%, behavioural, 78% attitudinal, 84% change as a result of participating in a system change training program.

Many studies attempt to determine what employers consider necessary skills for successful employment. In 1983 The Johns Hopkins University (Crain, 1984) completed a survey of 1,912 nation wide firms of various sizes on the perception of workers who were high school graduates. Nearly all personal officers identified dependability, proper attitudes about work and supervisors, ability to get along with people, and basic reading and math's skills necessary for successful employment. Only one third of the employers rated 'specialized knowledge' as extremely important.
In a study conducted a Southern Californian, Burton & Bero (1984), had interviewed 25 local employers to determine the skills they expect from handicapped employees. Employers responded with skills categorized as personal-social and coping skills, such as respect for authority, getting along with people, dependability and stigma. A survey was conducted to determine the necessity of 32 employment competencies for successful employment (DeMario, Rex & Morrean, 1990). The domains of skills surveyed include personal-social and occupational information, orientation and mobility, communication and daily living skills. Personal and social skill were ranked highest, and orientation and mobility and occupational information were ranked second highest. Individual competencies with the highest rating were exhibiting socially appropriate work habits. Traveling independently in the workplace also received a high rating among employers. A follow-up study was conducted of former students at the Wisconsin School for visually impaired persons between 1978-1987 (Heiden, 1989). Subjects rated adaptive skills, orientation and mobility, word processing as the most valuable course work. On-campus independent living experiences was also rated as very valuable.

Vibha Rani (1987-88) study tried to compare manual dexterity levels, job satisfaction, job involvement among the blind and the sighted. It also aimed at knowing if manual dexterity has any relationship with job involvement and job satisfaction among the blind. The findings of the study indicated that the blind group completed the task in less time and they committed less error as compared to the sighted. The Study also showed that there is a significant relationship of job involvement and finger dexterity with job satisfaction.

Gandy (1988) examined which factors had an effect on earning for the blind persons. In a study of 109 with visually impaired in Mississippi,
it was found that education had the most significant effect on earning, with earning increasing with the number of years of education.

**Hill (1989)** found such factors as the severity of impairments and levels and types of vocational rehabilitation services received have a significant influence on whether people who are visually impaired will find competitive employment when they finish rehabilitation program. The studies of Rum rill and Schiff (1997), have also illustrated the barriers the visually impaired persons encounter which have resulted in pervasive underemployment.

It is well known that discrimination acts as a potent factor and creates barriers for the visually impaired person in seeking a job for themselves and maintain them as well. **Tedder & McBroom (1989)** found that 58% of the respondents of their survey said that they have experienced discrimination because of their visually disability. According to McBroom & Tedder visually impaired persons tend to have several “False start” before they find a good match their training and aspiration and abilities and the requirement of a permanent positions. To solidify the match a major role is played by the employers ‘responsiveness to the employees’ disability -related needs’.

In an article published by **Simon Brisenden (1989)** on “Young Gifted and Disabled; entering the employment market” focused on the way system and services are designed to help disabled people simply act to increase dependency. It argues that unless service provision is based on our needs as we interpret them then we will continue to be excluded from the employment market. The study highlighted that on entering the world of employment the disabled persons are not very well prepared and the world of work is also not receptive. It has also shown that the employers are full of doubts and hesitation as they are prone to the sorts of prejudice and negative attitude.
The study presented by Neil Lunt & Patricia Thornton in 1993 explored the nature of disability employment policy drawing on evidence from fifteen countries. In line with earlier sociological approaches to disability it described two ways of framing policies in this area. These two paradigms are developed and used to critically evaluate employment policy under the headings: legislative measures, open employment financial measures, employment support services and sheltered/supported provisions. The dilemmas that may arise during implementation of policy were discussed and the consequences for the construction of an emancipatory employment policy.

Several explanations for high unemployment rate of people with disabilities appear in rehabilitation literature. Some focus on individual inadequacies, such as lack of training, physical or mental limitations and discouragement. Other literature have highlighted on societal issues, which include labour force trends, architectural barriers, public attitudes and discriminations. Still others emphasize on both personal and societal barriers.

Matani & Yadav(1994) to assess the educational and vocational training facilities provided by welfare agencies for the blind and to the problems they face in taking vocational training and to secure jobs along with the attitude of the employers. The problems identified were

- Non availability of Braille text books
- Inefficient /unsympathetic teachers
- Inadequate scholarship grants
- Unsuitable syllabus not related to jobs.

Bolton, Brain, Kridge, Robert & Meta (1995) summarized the result of 15 experimental studies of small group skill training interventions
developed for use with vocational rehabilitation clients (near age 25 years) who received a total of 6420 hours of skill training and were measured on 61 outcome measures. Results suggested substantial benefit to the typical participation.

**Gregory, Robert (1995)** suggested the role of rehabilitation counselors who could expand to people affected by situations other than disabilities, such as financial loss, including job loss. A cross cultural case study of a person unable to meet financial and social obligation was presented. A discussion of bankruptcy and other displacement and ideas for counselors were outlined. Rehabilitation counselors have skills and capabilities that can extend beyond the disability paradigm to include additional helping roles that may benefit large helping roles that may benefit large population of people and particularly those who became economically disadvantage.

**Moore and Wolfe (1997)** summarized a list of barriers that rehabilitation professionals and researchers considered significant contributors to the underrepresentation of persons with visual impairments in the labor force. These barriers included (a) negative attitudes of employers toward people with visual impairments; (b) lack of employment and employment-related skills; (c) lack of motivation for employment; (d) government-generated work disincentives, such as entitlement programs that provide welfare or disability benefits; (e) lack of housing and family supports; (f) lack of transportation; and (g) lack of access to information. Dahl (1982) identified the following barriers to employment for people with severe disabilities: unrealistic attitudes and opinions of society, lack of employer knowledge about people with disabilities, and clients' low expectations.

A Survey conducted in USA by **Louis Harris and Associates, 1998** reported that despite over a century of Rehabilitation program and
twenty five years of Disability Rights Legislation (Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which bans discrimination in federal employment, federal contracts and other programs that receive federal funds), about two-third of working age individual with disabilities are unemployed and only 20% are working full time. About 74% of the working age people with significant visual impairments are unemployed (McNeil, 1993).

There had been several efforts in America to support the employment of disabled persons. The Americans with Disabilities Act which had prohibited all discriminations in employment and tried to accommodate people with disabilities. Despite all efforts to create more employment opportunities the rate of employment is significantly low. Several researches carried out in America tried to focus on investigating the functional barriers to employment for persons with visual impairments. Many researches have also focused on the inter relationship between social support factors and employment status. Many researches have shown the importance of positive social support in the rehabilitation process and employment. Kaplan (1990) found that disabled persons living in intact family network reported of high satisfaction with their social support network and are more likely to be employed than those with low satisfaction and less social network. Studies of the past have also emphasized of support from family and friends for seeking and retention of jobs and adjustment with confidence for disabled people (Bolton, 1983; Crudden, 2002; Crudden; McBroom, 1999; DeMario, 1992; Kelly & Lombaret, 1992; McShane & Karp, 1993; Moore, 1994;). Cimarolli & Wang (2005) in their study tried to explore the amount of negative social support experienced by employed and unemployed adults with visual impairments. The research also tried to assess the differences in positive social support, differences in psychological well-being
(depression, anxiety and life situations). The study concluded that the visually impaired employed adult participants had more positive and less negative social support and had fewer anxiety symptoms and higher life satisfaction.

Rum rill; Roessler; Battersby-Longden; Scuyler (1996) conducted a study on situational Assessment of the Accommodation Needs of Employees who are visually impaired in Vermont and Massachusetts, barrier to job retention were assessed in four areas- accessibility of work sites, performance of essential functions, job mastery, and job satisfaction. The findings helped clarify the types of barriers to access, performance of essential functions, job mastery, and job satisfaction the participants faced. The results also suggested a variety of post employment services that rehabilitation counselors can provide, such as - job analysis; career counseling; identification of barriers; selection and implementation of reasonable accommodation; education of employees, supervisors, and co-workers. Finally the outcome of the study underscores the value of the work-experience. Survey as an important part of post employment services for people who are blind or have low vision.

Researches have shown that disabled individuals can expect a fall in their income level depending on the severity of their impairment, compared with non disabled men with otherwise similar characteristics. (Berthould et al, 1992). The findings denoted that the type of schooling that young with impairment receive does not provide them with the skills or opportunities for employment and participation in the wider society. Schooling is accused of reinforcing segregation, conditioning disabled people into a subordinate role and preparing and legitimizing practices such as stereotyping (Barnes, 1991). In the areas of education and employment comparisons have been drawn with the
experiences of discrimination by black and ethnic minority groups (Oliver, 1998).

Several researches as has been done shows up interesting statistics in favour of the working abilities of disabled people. These people generally have few days off sick and less days absence for reasons other than sever illness,(Birkett, 1988). Other studies have indicated that disabled persons are generally productive, have fewer accidents and do not increase an employer's compensation liability.

An extensive research work was carried out by Fred.R McFarlane (1999) presented at the International Seminar on Disability with a Focus on Employment Outcomes. The author had discussed the key consideration for personal development in the field with a focus on employment outcomes. The author has emphasized on the role of support and facilitation by rehabilitation personnel as structures for inclusion. He had discussed the fact that disabilities, like learning and change, are life time experience for all of us. Accordingly, comprehensive personnel development must be the alternative to the constituencies and the environment. It must be value based. Finally, comprehensive personnel development must address the present and future needs of all constituencies in the field of disability to achieve successful employment outcomes. The author had presented the context of an educational framework for rehabilitation personnel. This framework is based on four pillars- 1) Formal Education, 2) Professional Certification, 3) Continuing Education, 4) Self- Directed learning. The synergistic relationship among these pillars and the constituency groups provides the framework for effective disability policy and positive employment outcomes for person with disabilities.

The study presented by BonnieO Day (1999) had tried to explore a hypothesis that policies of federal income maintenance, health care
and rehabilitation program themselves contain elements that contribute to the high unemployment rate. The study used the findings of qualitative interviews to document these employment barriers among people with visual impairments. It was found that sometimes overwhelming personal barriers for the participants were intensified by significant societal barriers—barriers that occur when individuals with disabilities interact with their surroundings. These barriers have little to do with the individual or the disability, but are endemic to the social environment. People with disabilities must confront these barriers, irrespective of their personal attributes and skills; or experience. Societal barriers include negative public attitude about disability, social stigma, discrimination, the lack of access to technology and the lack of public transportation (Fine & Ach, 1988; Hahn, 1985, Kinchner & Harkins, 1991; Zola, 1989). Some of the participants of the study pointed to negative public attitude towards blindness, including limited expectations, stereotypes and misunderstanding, as a major barrier to finding and keeping jobs. Although they encountered these barriers daily, they said that these experiences were heightened during job searching process.

Charles E. Young (1999) in his literature regarding "Turning Negative into Positive at Job Interviews For People Who are Visually Impaired” in 1999 had mentioned that one of the greatest barriers to employment for people with visual impairment is the Employers doubt regarding the capabilities of Visual impaired people as employees. Employers usually have limited experiences with job applicants who are visually impaired, so it is not surprising that many do not know about the capabilities of this segregated population. He is of the opinion that if one has to address the problems faced by the job seekers he necessarily has to perceive the employers perspective and concern he might possess regarding hiring someone who is visually impaired. He
feels a rehabilitation professional must try to put himself in the employers' position to understand and identify positive aspects of visual impairment and explain disability in positive terms, to reduce the greatest barrier to employment for people who are visually impaired.

Previous research establishes the low participation of disabled people in employment (Hirst, 1987; Martin & White, 1988; Martin et al., 1989; Clark & Hirst, 1989; Barnes, 1991; Glendinning, 1991). Two factors are identified in the literature in relation to workforce participation. First, the level of unemployment is higher; as Berthoud et al. (1992) note the chance of unemployment increases with severity of disability and age. Secondly, there is the type of participation in the labour force and under employment, defined as - "poorly paid, low-skilled, low status jobs which are both unrewarding and undemanding" (Barness, 1991).

Professionals in the field of education and rehabilitation of persons with blindness and visual impairments have made suggestions based on their experiences. Areas identified as needed for successful employment by individuals with visual impairments were a positive self-concept (Ferris, 1991; Lombana, 1980) and appropriate social skills (Hatlin & Curry, 1987), orientation and mobility skills (Lombana, 1980), and independent living skills (Alanso, 1986; Harrell & Curry, 1987). Ferris (1991), in her study had emphasized the requirement of a positive self-concept for successful employment. The study suggested that recognizing one's own strength and weaknesses and positive self-concept is a potent factor and expectations of parents and teachers, their eagerness for the child to become independent and how they accept the child's limitation and strengths influence the self-concept of the child.
An Article published by National Federation of the Blind (2000) regarding developing Feeling of Independence and Self Sufficiency one finds the most positive approach to help the blind customer—"The blind person must come emotionally and not just intellectually to know that he or she, truly, can be independent and self-sufficient." The article states that it involves real expertise and time to help the blind customer to become a believer and to come emotionally to understand that true expertise and self-sufficiency are really possible. The ideal situation for the blind person is to experience a complete emersion into blindness and correct attitude about it. It further states that most schools and other training programs have never come to understand that emotional adjustment is the key towards empowerment and freedom. They tend to believe that an introduction or only a little training in simple skills of blindness is all that is needed for an average blind person. The training personnel's must be enable to deal effectively with the training programs and must understand that it is the society's misunderstanding and misconception about blindness and not blindness itself is the real problem which must be addressed true proper training. They must also understand that their blind customers may have brought erroneous attitude and that emotional adjustment is the key towards successful rehabilitation program. A good training program either for a child or an adult literally must be an attitude factory.

Leonard & D' Allura (2000) compared the psycho-social characteristics of employed and unemployed persons with visual impairment who had the experience of a vocational placement program. It was found that the employed category had more encouragement from family and friends, had higher self-efficacy scores than the unemployed group. Studies on employment status and social network of visually impaired college students in Great Britain
(Dimigen & Taylor, 1998) found that employed college graduates had a higher number of social interactions, had a larger range of people in their social network and had more helpful familial support than the unemployed category.

There is a rather dismal trend in terms of the current employment practices in the corporate sector with regards to people with disabilities in India says a study by the National Centre for Promotion Of Employment for Disabled People (2000). The Study, "The Present employment scenario in the super 100 companies of India with respect to people with disabilities" points out that Government's Attitude is amply reflected in the miniscule percentage of disabled employees even in the public sector organizations who arguably have a larger work force and for whom it is considered mandatory to have three percent reservation for disabled persons. The study found that out of 61 respondent companies, 20 companies did not employ any disabled persons at all. Also the average percentage of employees with disabilities in the respondent companies was found to be a dismal 0.35 percent.

Several outcome studies have been conducted using data obtained through the Alabama Student Tracking System, (Austin, 1999; Dunn et al., in press: Dunn & Shumaker, 1997; Holder, 2001; Rubreenet et al., 2002). These studies were conducted using information from the post school instruments. The effectiveness of any high school preparation program can, in part, be measured by the successful post-school outcomes. One outcome variable that has been examined through Alabama's student tracking system is employment status of former students one year after exit from the high school. Over a five year period, of the 2691 of the students with disabilities who responded to the questions as to whether or not they were employed one year after exit, 71% were employed and 29% were unemployed.
While these figures indicate that a high percentage of students are working a year after high school, the type of work in which they are engaged must be taken into consideration. For example, of those who indicated they are working, 52% were working full time and 48% were working part time.

Rabren et al (2002) examined the employment status of 1393 former students who received special education services and who exited from 37 of Alabama's 128 schools between 1996-2000. Using a hierarchical logistic regression analysis there was an 87% probability that these students would be employed one year after high school, if they held a job at the time they exited school. Other significant findings include the relationship between employed status and student gender, disability, and urban or rural settings. The probability of the student having a job one year after high school for example, was greater if the student was a male, had a disability, was from an urban school, and had a job at the time of school exit in contrast with the probability of employment less likely for females with a disability, from rural schools without a job at the end of high school. The findings from Rabren et.al (2002) suggests that programming initiated through the systems change project may have had an impact on the social condition of youth with disability. Specifically participation in an occupational diploma programs that requires students to enter paid employment during high school may have significantly improved the chances for employment one year after high school.

The psychosocial adjustment and the meaning of social support for the visually impaired were examined by Kef, Sabina (2002) on 316 Dutch adolescent. The findings indicated that social support, especially the support of the family and peers was important for the adolescent with visual impairments. The difference between the visually impaired and the sighted adolescent proved to be small but significant.
The need for job retention services in rehabilitation is clearly indicated in several statistics on unemployment and job loss rates for people with disabilities. The Article on Improving ‘Job Tenure Outcomes For people With Disabilities’ Roessler (2002) provides information on a three-part job retention model (the 3M model) containing the constructs of match, maturity and mastery. The Article states that individuals with disabilities are more likely to retain employment when rehabilitation counselors provide retention services compatible with the 3 M’s. Counselors can help people with disabilities: a) establish the prerequisite job person match, b) meet career maturity challenges, c) demonstrate mastery of novel work place problems.

Existing theories of career development have been criticized in the rehabilitation literature for having questionable applicability to persons with disabilities. Considering the divisibility of disability Scott, Craddock, Sharon, Heller, James, Mary et.al (2002) doubted that whether a generally applicable theory can be developed. They proposed a viable alternative to guide rehabilitation counseling practitioners a framework: the career development of individuals with disabilities can be classified into one or more statuses, each of which calls for different interventions. These statues form the acronym Income, Imagining, Informing, Choosing, Obtaining, Maintaining and Existing.

Michele E. Capella-McDonnell (2004) conducted a research study on The Ticket to Work Program: Employment Networks’ Views on Serving Beneficiaries Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired. The article reports on a survey of the opinion of employment networks about serving social security beneficiaries who are blind or visually impaired. The findings from the study found that almost all the employment networks serving the blind expressed concerns about working with them. They perceived difficulty in placing persons who are blind was a
reality on the basis of the lower employment rates compared to those with other disabilities. The findings of the study also denoted that the employees were unaware of the capabilities of the blind individuals and have negative stereotypes about their work abilities.

In an Article published in the rehabilitation Counseling; Basics and Beyond *Parker & Randle and Bolton (2005)*, discusses the principle methods and strategies that are essential in the psychological assessment of people with disabilities in vocational settings. The emphasis is on the practical knowledge useful techniques required for the purpose of Psychological assessment. The following topics were covered in the Article: The purpose of psychological assessment in Rehabilitation, Terminology and technical issues, the initial interview, Psychological assessment instruments, Interpretation of assessment results and sources of additional information.

Welfare to work program promoting employment of people with disabilities are an expanding aspect of welfare reform in the UK. In a review to determine the effectiveness of UK's Welfare to work program for people with disability one finds the evidence of 5399 abstracts from which 16 studies were critically appraised. Overall each of the main Welfare to work strategies operating in the 1990's helped people with disabilities into work who were previously on benefits program. The proportion of participants gaining employment after involvement ranged from 11% to 50% depending on the characteristics of participants such as 'job readiness' as well as labour market context. As most studies were uncontrolled it was difficult to determine if the improved employment chances were due to the effectiveness of the welfare program or due to the external factors. Wider impact such as uptake of schemes as a proportion of total target population was weak. The qualitative components identified barriers and facilitators
concerned with effective implementation of the welfare programs meant for the employment of the disabled persons.

An Article from the "Rehabilitation Counseling Program" Gilbride, Dennis & Hagner, David (2005) tried to outline the knowledge, skills and techniques that a rehabilitation counselor need to effectively help people with disabilities find their places in the world of work. The Article tried to utilize an ecological framework in its discussion on employment. Ecological approaches recognize that the consumer functions within a specific system, each contributing to the person’s ability to successfully transmitting into and succeed within the world of work rather than focusing exclusively on the consumers specific work skills or characteristics. An ecological framework recognizes that other systems, such as the family, society, labour market and service delivery network, all affect vocational opportunity and success for a disabled man.

Dawn B. Golub (2006) presented a paper on his research study on models of successful work experience for employees who are visually impaired. The purpose of the research reported in the article was to identify factors that contribute to a successful work experience. Instead of focusing on negative barriers and on overcoming barriers the study examined successfully employed persons with visual impairment. The major objective was to identify the factors that contribute to a successful work experience that could empower employees who are visually impaired to be more successful in the work environment and could at the same time educate employers about their potentials. The employers who were interviewed emphasized the dual responsibility that employees have to empower their own success, and that employers have to enable the employees to become successful. An integrative model of successful employment for the
visually impaired individuals was developed from the interviews with the employers.

**Alexander Shaw, Deborah Gold, & Karen Wolfe (2007)** research on Employment related Experiences of Youths Who Are Visually Impaired and How Are These Youths Faring. The article published (JVIB- Jan - 2007, Vol. 101, No-1) described the results in employment domain of a larger study of 328 Canadian youths with visual impairment. The youths completed a survey on their work related experiences, including their current employment status and job research strategies. In addition to characterizing the overall employment related experiences of the youths, the study explored differences by visual status, gender and age group. The findings of the study revealed that many youths spent little time actively searching for jobs and that many submitted few job applications. The youths experienced a number of barriers that are similar to those documented in the literatures of visual impairment but they also expressed great optimism about overcoming these barriers.

A case study was carried out by **Sethuramlingam, Rajalakshmi, Sathia & Deivajothi (2008)**. The primary objective was to study the socio-economic background, the nature of their disability, level of Job satisfaction, Job Stress and the safety measures available for the visually impaired persons in their working conditions. The study indicated that job stress does not play a vital role because of more support and less demand and control of the organization. The visually challenged persons work intensively to complete their job within time. The respondents did not have much concern about their safety which was taken care of by the employers.
2.6 INTEGRATING THE FINDINGS:

Studies pertaining to the different aspects of rehabilitation have been incorporated in the present research work. Several professionals in the field of rehabilitation of persons with blindness and visual impairment have made suggestions based on their experiences. They have identified self-concept, appropriate social skills, orientation, mobility and independent living skills as the most important factors for successful rehabilitation. Studies on rehabilitation have indicated that there are certain major obstacles in mainstreaming the visually impaired persons since the characteristics of the individual and the social atmosphere plays a dominant role in the rehabilitating process. Calvo-Novell (1985) indicated that the coping strategies of the visually impaired persons get weakened as their sight loss makes them feel threatened in the world, giving rise to discordance between the interpersonal and intrapersonal self-concept. Few studies have suggested that community based rehabilitation services are cost effective and less time consuming and should be applied under Government sponsorship in the rural parts of the country. Researches on rehabilitation have further indicated that the visually impaired persons undergo more physical and psychological stress than the sighted persons which has a bearing on the effective rehabilitation process. A recent study tried to assess the importance of primary support for adult visually impaired person. The study concluded that instrumental support reduces depressive symptoms and enhances the rehabilitation process.

Studies on self-concept which have been included in review of related literature have high lightened the fact self-concept is much dependent not on vision loss but mainly on body image and language. There are ample evidences to show that parental attitude plays a fundamental
role in helping the blind child to build a positive self-concept and foster their self confidence. Studies to assess self-concept in educated unemployed young men in India revealed that non technical educated and unemployed followed by technical educated had less positive self concept than those of there counterpart. The result of the study differs from the present research study since the present study is of the notion that there is no significant difference between the employed and unemployed visually impaired persons regarding the development of a positive self concept.

A reflection of the society’s depreciating attitudes towards the blind is to be found in the fact that there are very few research work undertaken to study attitudes of the blind towards the sighted and the attitude are not of crucial significance to the society(Whiteman & Lukoff,1961). Most of the studies on attitude towards blind have clearly pointed out that the general feeling towards disabled persons with special reference to blindness is negative. The negative attitudes of the past were more evident in the authoritarian countries but are equally prevalent in the developing countries where disability is considered as a economic liability.

Early studies have shown that the severity of the child’s handicap often influences the perception and a feeling of parents also gets altered when the child becomes blind at an older age. The findings from the research study by Summers (1944) suggested that there is a co relation between the attitude of the parents and adjustive pattern of the child which tend to develop maladjustive behavior in the later years of a blind man’s life. Lee (1964) in his study socialization of a blind person depends on the evolving social relationships within the family structure. Several other studies have pointed out that positive perception of parents play a positive role in coping process with the traumatic and stressful stages of life. Parents with positive perception
in the early stages of adjustment develop a positive and realistic outlook.

Rehabilitation literatures have laid stress on several explanations for high unemployment rate of people with disabilities. While some articles have focused on individual inadequacies in areas of lack of proper training along with physical and mental limitations others have high lightened on different kinds of barriers, public attitudes and discriminations emphasizing on both personal and societal barriers. Several research works have shown that the schooling the impaired person receives does not often provide them with the necessary skills and opportunities required for employment and hence the employers are doubtful about the visually impaired people's productivity. Other studies have emphasized that work readiness of the visually impaired persons are often determined by an interaction of personal attributes and the environment. The survey conducted by John Hopkins University tried to ascertain what the employers consider as necessary skills for successful employment of the disabled. Research literature and article have pointed out that specific skill training and a positive attitude orientation needs more emphasis in school years.