CHAPTER-I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

“THE KEY TO GROWTH IS THE INTRODUCTION OF HIGHER DIMENSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS INTO OUR AWARENESS”.

-LAO JZU
CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right which provides children, youth and adults with the power to grow, reflect, make choices and enjoy a better life. It breaks the cycle of poverty and is considered the key ingredient in economic and social development (Jonsson & Wilman, 2001; Peters, 2004; UNESCO, 1997). The World Education Encyclopedia (2004) identifies three functions that education is designed to fulfill. First, education is a basic human right which means that people require education not only for structured information but also as a tool for gaining skills, attitudes and values, which they can build upon later. Second, education is used as a means of meeting other basic needs such as employability and quality of life. The third factor is that education is an activity that sustains and accelerates economic development of countries. Education is a means of investment as it trains and prepares skilled workers at all service levels and affects every sector of the economy (UNESCO, 1997). “Education enables individuals to make the transition to new social orders by providing self understanding, better knowledge of the choices available, and a critical appreciation of the nature of change itself” (World Education Encyclopedia, 2004, p.18). Both empirical evidence as well as theories suggest that primary education and the early years of secondary education are recognized as being the most vital to economic growth (Abblet & Sengleson, 2001). Considering this evidence, Porter (2001) notes that when a large share of youth fail to complete primary education, the productivity of the labor force, the potential for knowledge-driven development, and the reservoir of human potential from which society
and the economy can draw are all fundamentally constrained. Essentially, education has major influences upon social, cultural, and economic characteristics of people and communities, ultimately contributing to economic growth and productivity at the local, national and global levels (Brink, 1997).

Education is a powerful instrument of social change, and often initiates upward movement in the social structure, thereby, helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. The education system of a country does not function in isolation of society of which it is a part. Hierarchies of castes, economic status, gender, cultural diversities and uneven economic development deeply influences issues relating to access and equity in education. Though India was widely acclaimed as a land of knowledge and wisdom during ancient times, yet access to education was limited to selected strata of the society. The societal distribution of responsibility and accountability might have been justified in those days, but in today’s context deeply entrenched social inequalities between various groups and castes, the centuries-old social prejudices and inequalities, based on caste at birth, continue to bring challenges for national development. Extending educational opportunities to marginalized groups has been considered as an antidote to this long standing discrimination by the framers of the constitution. Several attempts have been made by social reformers and others to make education accessible to marginal groups with varying degrees of success. The educational scene in the country has undergone major changes over the years, resulting in better provision of education and better educational practices for marginalized groups.
In almost every country, Children With Special Needs (CWSN) are being excluded from formal education; some of those, who go to school, do not complete. They are gradually and deliberately pushed out of the school system because schools are not sensitive to their learning styles and backgrounds. In a gesture of sympathy, these children are placed in separate special schools, away from their peers. This has led to the development of two separate systems of education, regular and special education. However, in recent years the rationale for having two parallel systems of education has been questioned. The thinking that has developed during the last 50 years in the disability field has significant influences not only on special education, but also on practice in regular education. Till 1990s ninety percent of India’s estimated 40 million children in the age group-four to sixteen years with physical and mental disabilities were excluded from mainstream education.

In the recent past, there have been several initiatives taken by the nations of world including India to bring the children with special needs to the fold of mainstream education so that they are provided an opportunity to grow and receive education in an inclusive environment. However, the provision of education to children with special needs in exclusive educational environments like special schools, integrated set-up etc. dates back to a long past. It is, therefore, necessary to have a glimpse of the developments in education of children with special needs in the past.

1.1. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: ORIGIN AND CONCEPT

The conceptualization of “children with special needs” determining the policy, research and practice in education is of British Origin. The Government Commission chaired by Baroness Mary Warnock (1978) reported that it was wrong, to identify children by means
of their ‘handicap’. Rather, the report emphasized, we should identify their educational difficulties and provide educational facilities accordingly. This led to the origin of the term, ‘Special Educational Needs (SEN)’, which became part of UK legislation, its classrooms and importantly-teaching-learning process.

There is no legal definition of this term in India. However, only in a few instances and documents, SEN has been accepted in its broader perspective across the various States of the country. On the whole, the focus has remained on learners with specific disabilities.

The Inclusive Education Scheme (MHRD, 2003) addresses the needs of learners with disabilities and focuses on the following categories of disability: visual disabilities (blind and low vision), speech and hearing disabilities, locomotor disabilities, and neuromusculoskeletal and neuro-developmental disorders including cerebral palsy, autism, mental retardation, multiple disability, and learning disabilities. The Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act (1995) defines the term ‘disability’ and different types of disabilities. According to the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, "Person with disability" means a person suffering from not less than forty per cent of any disability as certified by a medical authority (any hospital or institution, specified for the purposes of this Act by notification by the appropriate Government). As per the Act "Disability" means -

(i) Blindness; (ii) Low vision; (iii) Leprosy-cured; (iv) Hearing impairment; (v) Locomotor disability; (vi) Mental retardation; and (vii) Mental illness. The definitions of each of these disabilities are as follows:
Blindness refers to a condition where a person suffers from any of the following conditions,

i) Total absence of sight.

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

iii) Limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degree or worse;

"Person with low vision" means a person with impairment of visual functioning even after treatment or standard refractive correction but uses or is potentially capable of using vision for the planning or execution of a task with appropriate assistive device;

"Leprosy cured person" means any person who has been cured of leprosy but is suffering from-

i) Loss of sensation in hands or feet as well as loss of sensation and paresis in the eye and eye-lid but with no manifest deformity;

ii) Manifest deformity and paresis; but having sufficient mobility in their hands and feet to enable them to engage in normal economic activity;

iii) Extreme physical deformity as well as advanced age which prevents him/her from undertaking any gainful occupation, and the expression "leprosy cured" shall be construed accordingly;

"Hearing impairment" means loss of sixty decibels or more in the better ear in the conversational range of frequencies;

"Loco motor disability" means disability of the bones, joints muscles leading to substantial restriction of the movement of the limbs or any form of cerebral palsy;
- "Mental retardation" means a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind of a person which is specially characterized by sub-normality of intelligence;
- "Mental illness" means any mental disorder other than mental retardation;

There are checklists available to identify the various disabilities and are currently used to identify children with special needs.

Children with special needs are unique individuals. Their uniqueness may be noticed in one or more of the following dimensions: vision, hearing, movement, communication, perceptual-motor, social-emotional intelligence and adaptive behaviour. Consequently, these children can be classified into the following types:

- Children with Hearing Impairment
- Children with Visual Impairment
- Children with Intellectual Deficits
- Children with Learning Disability
- Children with Communication Disorders
- Children with Orthopedic Handicap
- Children with Emotional Disturbance
- Children who are Socially Disadvantaged
- Children with Multiple Handicaps
- Children with superior intelligence and special talents.
1.2 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS-A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

“There have always been exceptional children, but there have not always been educational programmes to meet their needs” (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1978). It is, therefore, pertinent to give some thoughts to the historical perspectives of educational programmes for special needs children. Remedial education, compensatory education, special education, special classes, the whole school approach, integration of these and many more programmes continued for some time and in due course, disappeared in history just as the term ‘integration’ is now being replaced by the term ‘inclusion’.

As per the Encyclopedia of Special Education, the introduction of special education began in 1832 with the establishment of first school for the deaf in Kentucky. The first College for the Deaf (Gallaudet College) was started in 1857 in Colombia. In 1896, Rhode Island began education classes for individuals with mental retardation. The first remedial centers were set up in England in the late 1940s (Golby and Gulliver, 1985).

Segregated institutions for individuals with disabilities continued to grow in numbers and size during the late 19th century until the 1950s. Concurrent attempts were made to create Public “common schools”, where most children were educated. However, various groups of children were excluded from the mainstream of public schools. For example, students with visible and significant disabilities continued, for the most part, to be segregated. Residential institutions and special schools were established for educating students who were blind or deaf or had physical disabilities. Students with developmental disabilities were generally denied educational services of any types. “Almost all children who were
wheel-chair-bound, not toilet-trained, or considered in-educable were excluded because of problems that schooling would entail” (Sigmon, 1983).

Along with establishment of special schools, special classes in public schools were also held for education of children with disabilities. “Special classes came about not for humanitarian reasons, but because such children were unwanted in the regular classroom” (Chaves, 1977).

Another notable feature is that special teachers were in a regular school, but in many were not part of it. General and special education developed on a parallel basis. But during the 1950s and 1960s, the organisation of special classes in public schools was the preferred system of delivery of education for most students with disabilities. It was during this period that public attitude towards the individuals with disabilities in schools and in the community began to change.

In India, segregated education of children with disabilities began with the establishment of the first special schools in Amritsar in 1887 by Anne Sharp, a missionary manager (Mani, 1998; Mukherjee, 1986; Pandey & Advani, 1997). However, Miles (1997) also reports that the first special school for mentally retarded and physically handicapped children began in India at Kurseong in 1918. The education of children with disabilities continued to be provided in segregated settings even after India’s independence in 1947. Of course, various NGOs assumed increasing responsibilities for the education of children with different types of disabilities.
1.2.1 The Movement towards Integration

During 1950s and 1960s parents’ organizations in USA initiated advocacy actions for education of their children with disabilities. A group of special education leaders such as Blatt, Dunn, Cruickshank, Hobbs, Lilly and Wolfensberger began advocating for the rights of the students with disabilities to learn in more normalized school environment with their peers. During this period, a large number of special educators explored the possibilities of integrating children with disabilities into the regular classrooms. For example, Klaus Wedell encouraged hearing-impaired children from a segregated unit in Bristol, England to join mainstream classroom activities. Similarly, Peter Mittler worked to integrate children with autistic spectrum disorders from a hospital setting into mainstream primary schools in England in the early 1960s. These two examples indicate that special educators were thinking towards “integration”, before the term was coined. The restrictions imposed by segregated institutions, special schools and special classes were perceived as problematic.

In the early parts of 1970s various court decisions in USA upheld the right of all children labeled as mentally retarded to free and appropriate education. Pressure by parents, courts and legislators resulted in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which was enacted in 1978. This law, modified as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 extended the right to a free public education to all children, regardless of disability, in the least restrictive environment possible. The term ‘Integration’ was thus formally introduced in 1978 (Peter Clough, 2000).
By the late 1970s and early 1980s, many disabled students began to be integrated in to the regular classroom on at least a part time basis. By the 1980s, attempts to educate children with disabilities in the regular classroom on a full time basis were made. Integrated education for disabled children was the favoured practice in all countries up to World Conference on Special Education Needs held at Salamanca, Spain in 1994.

1.2.2 Integrated Education in India

A number of national initiatives have contributed significantly to the movement towards integrated education in India. The Education Commission (1964-66) was the first to suggest that “education of handicapped children has to be organized not merely on humanitarian grounds but also on grounds of reality”. The Commission also emphasized that the education of the handicapped children should be an “inseparable part of the general education system”. In order to provide adequate service to handicapped children, the Commission recommended for adoption of two approaches, namely special education and integrated education.

Integration of children with disabilities into the regular classroom drew the attention of State Governments after the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India initiated the scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC) in 1974. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of IEDC was revised in 1981 and later in 1992, allowing 100 percent assistance to state governments for implementing the scheme. Moreover, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are now being involved in providing education to disabled children in regular classroom.
In 1986, the National Policy on Education (NPE) was formulated which was revised in 1992. The NPE (1986/1992) states that those children whose needs cannot be met in regular schools are to be enrolled in special schools. As soon as the disabled children enrolled in special schools acquire reasonable levels of daily living skills, communication skills and basic academic skills they will be integrated into regular schools. As per the NPE (1986/1992), “The objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence”.

In 1987, the Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) was implemented by the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), Government of India on a composite area approach to strengthen the scheme of IEDC. About 13000 children with disabilities in 8 states and 2 urban slums were benefited by the project. Over 9000 teachers received training to work with disabled children in integrated setting (Azad, 1996).

Rule 6 of UN Standard Rules for Persons with Disabilities states “States should recognize the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities in integrated settings. They should ensure that education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the education system. General education authorities are responsible for education of persons with disabilities in integrated settings. Education of persons with disabilities should form an integral part of national educational planning, curriculum development and school organizations” (Rao, 2003). India was a signatory to the UN Standard Rules for Persons with Disabilities.
In 1992, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), at its 48th session held in Beijing declared 1993-2002 as the Asian and Pacific decade for Disabled Persons. India attended the ESCAP Committee meeting and pledged to implement the recommendations on full participation and equality of people with disabilities in the fields of rehabilitation, education and employment including promotion of integration of children and adults with disabilities in formal and non-formal educational programmes.

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), a major internationally assisted programme was launched in November, 1994 in the country to reform and renew the primary education system of the country. It was implemented in 149 educationally backwards districts of 14 states. One significant feature of DPEP was its emphasis on Integrated Education for the Disabled.

The remaining districts which were not covered under DPEP are being covered under Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan (SSA) which was launched in the year 2002 and represents the latest and the all subsuming initiative for universal elementary education in the country. The SSA vision was to provide useful and relevant elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010, bridging all social and gender gaps with the active participation of the community in the school affairs. The goals of SSA are:

- All children shall be in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, Back to school Camp by 2003.
- All children shall complete five years of schooling by 2007.
- All children shall complete eight years of elementary education by 2010.
➢ Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
➢ Bridging all gender and social gaps by 2010.

Although the Government of India had made several attempts to integrate disabled children into the regular classrooms, it lacked in firm commitment to promote integration. The Persons with Disability Act (PWD Act) 1995, has made integration of students with disability a legal responsibility of the Government. The PWD Act, 1995 states, among other things:

“ The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of 18 years (Article 26a); endeavour to promote the integration of students with disabilities in the normal schools (Article 26b)”.

In spite of all these policies and acts, integrated education could not succeed in terms of:
➢ Enrolment of children with disabilities;
➢ Perception of teachers about the educability of these children;
➢ Acceptance and respect by teachers and peers;
➢ Collaboration of teachers providing quality education to such children;
➢ Leadership of head teachers;
➢ Involvement of parents; and
➢ Community support.

The trend is at present directed towards inclusive education.
1.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusion-A world wide movement

Historically we have had two educational systems-one for students with disabilities (education in special schools) and the other (education in regular classroom). The movement towards integration of students with disabilities into the regular classroom started in the second half of twentieth century. The trend at present is to create one education system that values all students-to devise a classroom that respects diversity-an inclusive school that welcomes all students irrespective of disability, community background, sexuality, ethnic background, etc.

Julka (2001) has traced the path of inclusion which is presented in the Fig.1.1

As the figure indicates the policy for the provision of facilities for children with special needs has progressed from segregation in special schools to inclusion in the neighbourhood schools which aims at empowerment of all children.
Internationally, the drive towards inclusion of children with special needs into the mainstream of regular schools is fuelled by a number of initiatives and treaties including the UN convention on the Rights of the child (1989), the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994).

The World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand, which was reaffirmed in the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), mentions “In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly. Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners……”

In 1994, representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations formed the World conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain. They agreed a new dynamic statement on the education of all disabled children, which called for ‘inclusion to be the norm’. Paragraph 2 contains the key statement and comprises the following five clauses.

➢ The first clause states a view on children’s rights: Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.

➢ The second clause asserts each child’s uniqueness; every child has uniqueness; every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
The third clause states a belief about how the education system should operate as a consequence of this premise; education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.

The fourth clause states that those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools, which should accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.

Finally, clause five provides a rationale for regular schools: regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitude, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education for the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

The World Conference went on to call upon all governments to: give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve education services so that all children could be included regardless of differences of difficulties; adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education and enroll all children in regular schools unless there were compelling reasons for doing otherwise; develop demonstration projects and encourage exchange with countries with inclusive schools; ensure that organizations of disabled people, along with parents and community bodies are involved in planning and decision-making; put greater efforts into preschool strategies as well as vocational aspects of inclusive education and ensure that both initial and in-service training address the provision of inclusive education.
The statement calls on the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schooling and to support the development of special needs education as an integral part of all education programmes. In particular it calls on UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank for their endorsements.

Inclusive education, which has emerged as a reform in the education of children with special needs, gained momentum since World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994). It is significant that some countries have made significant advances towards promoting inclusive education in their legislation. Examples include: Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Iceland, India, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States. At the same time inclusion has been the subject of heated debate in professional journals, training programmes for teacher educators and among special education leaders. What does inclusion imply? What is inclusive education? What does an inclusive classroom look like? How is the inclusive approach different from the traditional approach? These are some of the fundamental questions which need to be addressed to in understanding the concept of inclusive education.

1.3.1 The Concept of Inclusion/Inclusive School/Inclusive Education

The dictionary definition of the term ‘inclusion’ is defined as: ‘to have as a part; contain in addition to other parts or to put in with something or someone else; take in or consider as part of a group’. (Longman’s English Dictionary).

In education, ‘Inclusion’ refers to the placement and education of students with disabilities in general education classrooms with students of the same age who do not
have disabilities. The underlying premise of inclusion is that all children can learn and belong to the mainstream of school and community life. Inclusion is a basic value that extends to all children. Inclusion gives a message:

“Everyone belongs to the school. Everyone is welcome to the school” (Kgothuler, 2007).

The goal of inclusion is to ensure that all children, regardless of any individual differences they may have, are fully included in the mainstream of life. Inclusion is the provision of services to students with special needs in the neighbourhood schools with necessary support services and supplementary aids for both children and teachers. It means meeting the needs of all children with and without disabilities for a free and quality public education in the least restrictive and most effective environment of the neighborhood schools.

Inclusion does not mean putting children with special needs into the regular classroom. We have to accept their diversity, respect their individuality, create opportunities for their participation in all activities of the school, and provide support to both children and teachers so that children can realize their full potential and teachers will be able to improve their performances. Thomas (1997) has defined inclusion as the “acceptance of all pupils in the mainstream system, taught with a common framework, and identified as the responsibility of all teachers”.

“Inclusion is a process (rather than a specific ideology or a set of practices). It is not merely about providing access into mainstream school for pupils who have previously been excluded. It is not about closing down an unacceptable system of segregated provision and putting these pupils in an unchanged mainstream system. Existing school systems—in terms of physical factors, curriculum aspects, teaching expectations and
styles, leadership roles- will have to change. This is because inclusive education is about the participation of all children and young people and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practices” (Bartons, 1998).

“Inclusion is a term which can be defined as an attitude or a commitment of appreciating diversities and accepting that all students can be educated in a common school to their maximum potential. It requires increasing the capacity of regular schools so that they can respond creatively to greater diversities. It also involves building the capacities of teachers to deal with diverse population of students and to acquire pedagogical competencies that facilitate the learning of all students in their classroom” (Julka, 2001).

Booth (1999) emphasizes three criteria for inclusive education system such as, increasing the participation, reducing exclusion and giving equality when he says- “I define inclusive education as the process of increasing the participation of learners within, and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of neighbourhood centers of learning. It is about giving learners an equality of regard irrespective of their background, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and attainment”.

Lindsay (2000) has very rightly stated “it (inclusive education) is championed as a means to remove barriers, improve outcomes, and remove discrimination. Inclusion is, however, a complex and contested concept and its manifestations in practice are many and various”.
Inclusive School

A school that promotes inclusive education is called an inclusive school. An inclusive school is a place to which everyone belongs, is accepted, supports and is being supported by his/her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his/her educational needs met” (Stainback, Stainback & Forest, 1989). Inclusive schooling is the process of operating a classroom or school as a supportive community, where the needs of all members are met and people support and accept responsibility for each other.

REJECTION, INTEGRATION AND NOW INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Don’t come to me, I am to not for you
Come, but you change, I won’t.
Welcome! I change respond to you all

Fig.1.2: Three types of schools

According to Thomas, Walker & Webb (1998), “an inclusive school contains the following elements:

It is community based: an inclusive school reflects the community as a whole. Membership of the school community is open, positive and diverse; it is not selective, exclusive or rejecting.
*It is barrier free*: an inclusive school is accessible to all who become members—physically in terms of the building and grounds, and educationally in terms of curricula support systems and methods of communication.

*It promotes collaboration*: an inclusive school works with, rather than competitively against other schools;

*It promotes equality*: an inclusive school is democratic”.

Inclusive classroom is different all the time because the environment is created by whatever interactions the teacher and the students have as a group or as individuals in the group. It is a classroom where lots of students do different things with peers and teachers helping them. It is a classroom where students move from one environment to another. It is also a classroom where students smile, they are actively engaged, and the teacher is delighted to be there. It is a classroom where teachers come with a lot of preparation, clear vision and strong commitments. But it is difficult to get such ideal classrooms always. “Inclusion without resources, without commitment, without a vision statement, without restructuring and without staff development won’t work” (Mara Sapon-Shevin, 2003).

In 2005, UNESCO issued *Guide to Inclusive Education: Access to Ensuring Education for All People*, defining inclusive education: Inclusive education is to reduce the exclusion inside and outside educational system by increasing learning, culture and community participation. Facing the diverse needs of all learners, inclusive education is the process of reacting to the needs. According to this definition, inclusive education tries to make all the people receive the same good quality education, especially to help those
students who might be marginalized or discriminated because of their physical, mental, economic and environmental conditions to receive the same good-quality education.

In 2008, UNESCO held the 48th International Conference on Education in Geneva. The theme of this conference is “Inclusive education: the only way”. The purpose of this conference is to promote the development of inclusive education worldwide from the trans-regional perspective. State councilor from China Liu Yandong attended the conference and made an important speech. She pointed out, “Putting forward inclusive education reflects the respect to everybody and the protection to human rights. It conforms to the requirements of the times and the trend of future. It will have an important effect on establishing harmonious world.” Liu Yandong expressed that inclusive education should be brought into China’s medium-and-long-term educational planning to propel fair education which covers all the people, develop high-quality education which shares resources, and construct life-long education.

1.3.2 Meaning and Definitions of Inclusive Education

Inclusion is a philosophy built on the belief that all people are equal and should be respected and valued as an issue of basic human rights. It is an “unending set of process” in which children and adults with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in all community activities offered to people who do not have disabilities. ………………….

(UNESCO - at the UN-Committee on Rights of the Child, October 6, 1997 - Centre for Human Rights, Geneva).

Inclusion means the process of educating children with Special Educational Needs alongside their peers in mainstream schools. Inclusive education is a process schools undertake to respond to each pupil as an individual learner within a diverse group,
requiring schools’ restructuring of personnel, resources and curricula to accept and utilize diversity.  

*International Encyclopedia of Inclusive Education*

Inclusive education refers to all learners, young people - with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary pre-school provisions, schools and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services. This means that schools have a duty to try to include children with disabilities in regular classes unless the nature and severity of disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.  

*Central Advisory Board on Education----June, 2005*

Article 27 of **UN convention on right of persons with disabilities held on 3rd May 2008** speaks that inclusive education is the process of including students with disabilities in general education system, providing the necessary support when needed, ensuring vocational training, adult education and life long learning, providing reasonable accommodation in such places such as schools and workplaces, that is those necessary and reasonable modifications and adjustments that permit inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Inclusive education means a system of education wherein all students—i.e. those with and without disability—learn together, most or all of the time, and the system of teaching-learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students such that learning outcomes of comparable/satisfactory quality are achieved for all students.  

*The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2012*
To sum up, inclusive education means the provision of services to the students with special needs in their neighborhood schools with necessary support services and supplementary aids for both students and teachers. It means meeting the requirements of children with special needs for free and quality public education in the least restrictive and most effective environment.

1.4 TRADITIONAL APPROACH AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH

Until recently children with special needs were educated with traditional approach. The trend at present is to educate all children with inclusive approach. Therefore, it is relevant to know how the new inclusive approach is different from old traditional approach.

Johnson (1995) answers the question by making a distinction between traditional approach and inclusive approach. According to him, the inclusive approach calls for certain reforms in school practices as is evident from Table1.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Approach</th>
<th>Inclusive Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education for some</td>
<td>Education For all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static/Rigid</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective learning</td>
<td>Invidualized Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning in a segregated setting</td>
<td>Learning in integrated setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on teaching (Subject-centered)</td>
<td>Emphasis on learning (Child-centered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic/Prescriptive</td>
<td>Holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities limited by Exclusion</td>
<td>Equalisation of opportunities for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability view</td>
<td>Curricular view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels children disability wise</td>
<td>Planning is made on ability levels and opposes all kinds of labelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Jhonson, 1995)
**Integrated Education and Inclusive Education**

While an attempt is made to explain the origin of inclusive education, Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) caution that, since the 1980s, in most countries there has been a movement towards integration of ‘special education’ into the mainstream. Misunderstanding regarding the terms ‘integration,’ ‘mainstreaming’ and ‘inclusiveness’ or ‘inclusion’ has also occurred. In clarifying these terms, Thomson (1998) indicates that the concept of inclusiveness is not synonymous with integration. Inclusiveness is a broader concept. The first step in inclusiveness is to determine the best possible learning environment, given the individual student and learning task. The author states that no apology is necessary for the paradox that the concept of inclusive education and learning is not coincidental with total integration into the mainstream.

A further clarification of these terms is given by the Education White Paper 6 of Republic of South Africa which talks of ‘mainstreaming’ or ‘integration,’ and distinguishes it from ‘inclusion’. The distinguishing description, according to Department of Education (DoE), Republic of South Africa (2001) is given in Table 1.2 (please refer to page No.26).

From the explanations provided in the Table ‘inclusion’ indicates more than just ‘mainstreaming,’ because it is regarded as a moral issue of human rights and values as embodied in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994).

“An inclusive school and the process of inclusive schooling is the ultimate goal of integration and mainstreaming. Once inclusive schooling is achieved integration and mainstreaming will be no longer be necessary, since there will no longer be anyone left out to be integrated or mainstreamed into regular educational settings” (Stainback and Stainback, 1990).
Table 1.2: Comparison between integration and inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Mainstreaming’ or Integration</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming is about getting learners to ‘fit into’ a particular kind of system or integrating them into this existing system.</td>
<td>Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming is about giving some learners extra support so that they can ‘fit in’ or be integrated into the ‘normal’ classroom routine. Learners are assessed by specialists who diagnose and prescribe technical interventions, such as the placement of learners in programmes.</td>
<td>Inclusion is about supporting all learners, educators, and the system as a whole, so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus is on teaching and learning actors, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming and integration focus on changes that need to take place in learners so that they can ‘fit in’. Here the focus is on the learner.</td>
<td>Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on the adaptation of and support systems available in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Why should inclusive education be promoted? What does it matter? What are the reasons for justifying inclusive education for children with disabilities? Inclusive education for children with disabilities can be justified from educational perspective, sociological perspective, economic perspective, humanitarian perspective, democratic perspective, constitutional provisions and legal provisions.

1.5.1 Educational perspective

Inclusive schooling is the practice of including everyone—irrespective of talent, disability, socio-economic background or cultural origin—in supportive mainstream schools and
classrooms where the needs of all students are met. By educating all students together, persons with disabilities have the opportunity to prepare for life in the community, teachers improve their professional skills and society makes the conscious decision to operate according to the social value of equality. The justification of inclusive education can be discussed in terms of benefit to students, teachers and society.

In the words of Vandercook, et.al. (1988), in inclusive classrooms all children are enriched by having the opportunity to learn from one another, grow to care for one another and gain the attitude, skills and values necessary for our communities. When proper arrangements are present, inclusion works for all students with and without disabilities in terms of mutually held positive attitudes, gains in academic and social skills and preparation for living in the community.

1.5.2 Sociological Perspective

According to Stainback and Stainback (1990), “if a society supports integration of all individuals, then segregated schools and classrooms have no place in that society. There is no defensible rationale, excuse, nor scientific research that can be concluded that will, in the final analysis, justify segregation”. In the opening address to the Victorian Federation of State School Parent’s Club seminar On Integration of Children with disabilities into local schools (November, 1981) Dr. Graham Clunies-Ross stated that “Societal attitude towards the child with disability may be altered positively through integration”. What Grahams stated in 1981, holds for inclusive education even today.

1.5.3 Economic Perspective

In a country like India, Inclusive Education for children with disabilities is justified from economic perspective. This is evident from the following facts. There are an estimated
650 million persons with one form of disability or the other all over the world and 10% of this number is estimated to be in India. That means we have 65 million persons with disability (Disability kar, April, 2007). Ninety seven percent of disabled children in developing countries are without any form of rehabilitation. 98 percent of disabled children are without any education (Disability kar, 2007). Kenneth Eklindh states more than 90% of disabled children in developing countries are not in the school (Education today, Oct-Nov.2007). Their participation in economic activities contributing to national development is as crucial as that of the normal people. Therefore, education of persons with disabilities assumes a lot of significance.

1.5.4 Humanitarian Perspective

The framework for action (Salamanca Statement, 1994) says: Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of Human Rights. In the field of education, this is reflected in bringing about a genuine equalization of opportunity. Human differences are normal and that instruction must be adapted to the needs of the children, rather than the children are fitted into the process. The fundamental principle of inclusive school is that all children should learn together, where possible and that regular schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students.

1.5.5 Democratic Perspective

In democracy, all children whether they are disabled or not have the right to education as they are the future citizens of the country. Inclusive education is a human right. All children have the right to learn together. Children should not be de-valued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability. Even disabled adults describing themselves as special school survivors are demanding an end
to segregation. They do not need to be protected from each other. If integration and equity for all people in society is desired, then segregation in the schools can not be justified. If we really want someone be part of our lives, we should do whatever is possible to welcome that person and accommodate his/her needs.

Equal opportunity to education is one of the parameters of democracy. Without fair education there is no democratic society. People’s rights of educational equality can be secured forcefully in a society with strong democratic ideas. On the contrary, in a society which lacks democratic ideas, people lack the knowledge of democratic ideas and the pursuit of equal rights. This makes it difficult to ensure justice and equality in the field of education. This also makes the appearance of exclusion of the disadvantaged groups and abates their consciousness of active participation, which can reflect the democratic view of inclusive educational idea and requires every person who receives education to take part in the social decision-making in order to reconstruct the society. Inclusive education advocates that everybody has the right to receive education equally. Inclusive education assumes that every student is unique and has his/her own characters, interests, abilities and learning needs. These differences should be foundation to care for them and provide appropriate learning conditions from equalitarian point of view.

1.5.6 Constitutional Perspective

The constitution provides all citizens, including the disabled, the right to education. Article 29 (2) of the Constitution provides that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds. This also means that every child has right to receive education in an educational institution of his/her choice which is preferably the neighbourhood school. This also
implies that every child with a disability has the right to receive education in inclusive setting and the authority concerned cannot deprive the child of his/her rights unless there are compelling reasons to do so.

Article 41 does mention people with disabilities and says in part “the State shall within the limits of its economic development make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement and in other cases of undesired want”.

Article 45 of the constitution directs the state to provide free and compulsory education for ALL children (including the disabled) until they attain the age of 14 years. Recently compulsory primary education Acts have been enacted by various States including the state of Orissa. In the state of Orissa, this Act requires parents to send their children to school. Of course parents of children with disabilities may like to send their children either to special schools or to inclusive schools. Inclusive education is justified in view of financial constraints of parents to send their children with disabilities to special schools and/or unavailability of special schools in the neighbourhood.

1.5.7 Legal Perspective
Inclusive does not mean including children with disabilities into regular classrooms of the neighbourhood school. In order to serve the purpose of inclusion, children with disabilities must be provided with support from trained and qualified professionals. In fact, children with disabilities have the right to be served by trained and qualified rehabilitation professionals. Until 1992, a large number of institutions were running a variety of training programmes based on different models. In order to regulate all such training of rehabilitation professionals, Govt. of India enacted the Rehabilitation Council
of India Act, 1992 (RCI Act, 1992). It was amended by Rehabilitation Council of India (Amendment) Act, 2000 to provide for monitoring the training of rehabilitation professionals and personnel, promoting research in rehabilitation and special education as additional objectives of the Council.

- Recognition of qualifications in the field of disability and rehabilitation granted by institutions, universities, etc., in India for rehabilitation professionals.
- Recognition of qualifications granted by Institutions outside India under reciprocal system.
- Granting/withdrawal of recognition to institutions on the basis of approved standards.
- Set minimum standards of education /curriculum.
- Maintenance of Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) for rehabilitation professionals/personnel.
- Provision for inclusion/removal of names from CRR.

The RCI through its linkages with training institutions and universities has been undertaking standardization of curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, assessment of teacher training and research and development in the field of disability and rehabilitation. The RCI does not function only with the objectives stated above. It looks ahead. It works for creating awareness about and promotion of inclusive education. It is estimated that there are about 30.28 lakh children with special needs have been identified in India (Annual Report: 2011-12, MHRD) and we cannot have special schools for all of them.
Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995

Landmark legislation in the history of special education in India is the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995. This comprehensive Act covers seven disabilities, namely blindness, low vision, hearing impaired, loco-motor impaired, mental retardation, leprosy cured and mental illness. Chapter V (Section 26) of the Act, which deals with education, mentions that the appropriate Governments and the local authorities shall:

- Ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of eighteen years;
- Endeavour to promote the integration of students with disabilities in normal schools;
- Promote setting up of special schools in government and private sectors for those in need of special education in such a manner that children with special needs living in any part of the country have access to such schools; and
- Endeavour to equip the special schools for children with special needs with vocational training facilities.

National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999

Another landmark legislation is the National Trust Act, 1999. This Act seeks to protect and promote the rights of persons who, within the disability sector, have been even more marginalized than others. Though the National Trust Act of 1999 does not directly deal with the education of children with special needs, one of its thrust areas is to promote
programmes, which foster inclusion and independence by creating barrier-free environment, developing functional skills of the disabled and promoting self-help groups. The object of the National Trust is to empower families to retain their disabled members within the family and the community. The Trust reaches out to disabled persons and their families and provides a range of relief and care services. Such services may be provided through institutional care or in the homes in case the families and their disabled members are unable to access the services outside the house.

**The Right of children to free and compulsory education Act, 2009**

The 86th Constitutional Amendment was passed 8 years ago in December 2002. It provided for insertion of Art 21A, emanating from Art 21 being the Fundamental Right to Life. Art 21A provides for free and compulsory education to children in the 6-14 age group as a Fundamental Right in the Constitution of India. Consequent to this insertion the existing Art 45 in the Directive Principles was replaced and made applicable to children in the 0-6 age group.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 provides free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of EE.

**Free**

No child is liable to pay any fee/expense preventing him/ her from pursuing and completing Elementary Education.

**Compulsion**

Not enrolled/dropout children to be admitted to age appropriate class.

**Establishing schools in the neighbourhood**

Upgrading all EGS / AIE into regular schools
Opening schools in unserved areas

Providing additional classrooms and facilities

Barrier free access.

Mainstreaming out-of-school children

Inclusive education

1.6 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDIA

1.6.1 Special Schools in India

Along with other parts of the world, India too, witnessed the emergence of special schools for people with disabilities. The first school for the deaf was set up in Bombay in 1883 and the first school for the blind was established at Amritsar in 1887. There was rapid expansion in the number of such institutions. Today, there are more than 3200 special schools throughout India.

1.6.2 Integrated Education

The concept of integrated education gained momentum in India during the mid 1950s. Small experiments in this area were begun by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, and the Christopher Blind Mission. The Ministry of Education, too, launched a comprehensive scholarship scheme in 1952—a beginning of the integrated education initiative by the Government.

1.6.3 Integrated Education for Disabled Children

Consequent on the success of international experiments in placing children with disabilities in regular schools, the Planning Commission, in 1971 included in its plan a programme for integrated education. The Government launched the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme in December 1974. But the pace of implementation
was slow. However, later on there was a shift in integrated education strategy, from a school based approach to a Composite Area Approach. In 1987, the Ministry of Human Resources Development, along with UNICEF launched another experiment: Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED). Under PIED, there was a significant increase in the number of not only children with mildly disability, but also children with severe disability, with the number of children with orthopedic handicap far outstripping other children with disability in school system. All these perform at par with non-disabled children; in fact their retention rate was higher than that of non-disabled children and absenteeism was low. PIED had also a positive impact on the attitudes of the teachers, the heads of schools, as well as parents and the community in general. Also, the interaction between the children with disability and the children with out disability was good.

1.6.4 Inclusive Education

Another important paradigm shift in this area was initiated with the thinking that any difficulty that a child exhibited in learning was to be attributed not to a problem within the child, but to the school system. The organisation and management of schools, and the various programmes of teaching and interventions could also be one of the causes of learning difficulties of children. The new whole school policy is also referred to as the social or environmental model and rests on the theory that the child is a product of his/her experiences and the interventions the child has with various environments that impinge upon him/her. Thus, to a great extent, a child’s growth and development depends upon this.
1.6.5 Inclusive Education in District Primary Education Programme

Inclusive education was also focused in District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). Moreover, DPEP addressed core issues related to curriculum such as what factors limit the access of certain children to curriculum; what modifications are necessary to ensure fuller access to curriculum. Thus, with its child-centered pedagogy, DPEP set a stage where children with special needs could be provided learning opportunities tailored to their needs. IED was formally added in DPEP in 1997. By 1998, many DPEP states had conducted surveys, assessment camps and evolved strategies to provide resource support to those children with special needs who were enrolled in DPEP schools.

1.6.6 Inclusive Education in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The key objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Three important aspects of UEE are access, enrolment and retention of all children in 6-14 years of age. The goal of UEE, has further been facilitated by the Constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, making free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right, for all the children in the age group of 6-14 years. This Amendment has given a new thrust to the education of Children With Special Needs (CWSN), as without their inclusion, the objective of UEE cannot be achieved. In-fact inclusion of one of the groups, which is extremely crucial for UEE, is perhaps that of the children with special needs. Hence, education of children with special needs is an important component of SSA.

SSA’s Policy on Inclusion

SSA ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. Hence, SSA has
adopted a zero rejection policy. This means that no child having special needs should be deprived of the right to education and taught in an environment, which is best, suited to his/her learning needs. These include special schools, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) centers, Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) or even home-based education.

Thus, SSA has adopted a more expansive and a broad-based understanding the concept of inclusion, wherein a multi-option model of educating children with special needs is being implemented, two additional forms of resource support, complementary to each other, being provided to children with special needs are through assistive devices and barrier free access.

These practices and innovations in SSA are no doubt leading to a gradual increased identification of children with special needs. From 14.59 lakhs children with special needs identified in 2003-04, 26.21 lakhs have been identified in 2007-08. Similarly, the enrollment of children with special needs in 2007-08 has gone up to 21.58 lakhs children with special needs as compared to 11.71 lakhs children with special needs in 2003-04. More children with special needs are likely to be covered through various interventions and strategies. Household surveys and special surveys have been conducted by all the states to identify children with special needs.
Table 1.3: Yearwise identification and enrollment of children with special needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of children with special needs identified</th>
<th>No. of children with special needs enrolled in regular schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>683554</td>
<td>566921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>1459692</td>
<td>1171993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>1592722</td>
<td>1424310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>2017404</td>
<td>1560539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>2399905</td>
<td>1997777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>2621077</td>
<td>2158034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** www.ssa.nic.in

As per Annual Report 2011-12, MHRD, Govt. of India out of 30.28 lakh children with special needs have been identified, 26.46 lakh children with special needs (87.38% of those identified) are enrolled in schools. Further 78599 children with special needs are being covered through school readiness programme in 20 states/UTs and 162072 children are being provided home-based education in 31 states/UTs. In all 95.33% of identified children with special needs have been covered through various strategies. It is estimated that there are over 2500 special schools across the country (RCI, 2000). There has been an increase in the number of special schools for the blind and deaf, and in the enrolment of children with blindness and deafness. In 1994, there were 25 schools for the blind with 1156 children (CABE, 1994); by 1998, there were 200 schools and 15,000 children (MHRD, 1999). Similarly, in 1994 there were 35 schools for the deaf with 1311 children; by 1998, there were 280 schools with 28,000 children (MHRD, 1999). In addition, children with disabilities also make use of the National Institute of Open schooling. The
National Institute of Open Schooling provides distance education through printed materials, and contact in study centers. Its flexibility in terms of subjects offered and the pace of learning has made it popular in special units and for the education of children with disabilities. Despite such efforts, many children with disabilities are still denied access to education. It is believed that not more than 2–3 per cent of children with disabilities have access to education (Draft National Policy on Special Education, 2002).

Since the inception of the National Institute of Open Schooling in 1989, cumulative enrolment has risen from 49,000 to 7,233,456, but, there has been no significant increase in the proportion of children with disabilities enrolled. During 2011-12, 1852 children with loco motor disability, 207 children with visual impairment, 748 children with hearing impairment, 205 Leprosy Cured children, 6074 children with mental retardation, 90 children with mental illness and 263 children with multiple handicaps were enrolled.

1.6.7 Inclusive Education in Orissa

According to Census 2001, there are 10.21 lakh persons with disabilities in Orissa who constitutes 2.77 percent of the total population of the state and as per the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) estimates the children with specific needs in the State is 1.4% which has been reported in the UNICEF report titled ‘state plan of action for children, Govt. of Orissa, 2009-2012. This includes children with visual, hearing speech, locomotor, mental disabilities. Out of them, 5.14 lakh are disabled in seeing, 0.69 lakh in speech, 0.84 lakh in hearing, 2.81 lakh in movement and 1.64 lakh in mental activity. The State Govt. provides free education to children with visual impairment, hearing impairment and children with mental retardation in Special Schools having specially-trained teachers. Apart from 4 special schools (2 for the blind and 2 for the deaf) directly
managed by State Government through School and Mass Education Deptt., 50 Special Schools are being run in the State by different agencies including Non-Govt. Organizations with Grant-in-Aid from the State Government. Of these, 18 schools are for children with visual impairment, 21 for the children with hearing impairment and 11 schools are for children with mental retardation. The total approved student strength in these 50 schools is 2939 and staff strength (both teaching and non-teaching) is 620. Apart from these 50 state-funded schools, 61 special schools with 2843 students on roll are being run in the State by NGOs/Voluntary Organizations with Grant-in-Aid from the Govt. of India. The earlier emphasis on medical rehabilitation has now been replaced with greater focus on comprehensive coordinated socio-economic rehabilitation.

In exercise of the powers conferred by Sub-section (1) and Sub-section (2) of Section 73 of PWD Act, 1995, the State Government has enacted Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of right and full participation) Orissa Rules, 2003 to carry out basic objectives of PWD Act, 1995 like guidelines for evaluation of various forms of disabilities, constitution of State Co-ordination Committee and State Executive Committee, recognition of institutions for persons with disabilities, appointment of Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities etc. besides implementation of provisions of National Legislation like National Trust Act ,1999 & Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992.

1.7 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Inclusion is a worldwide movement today. Tracing back to the past, we find that the provision of facilities for children with special needs has progressed from segregation to inclusion in neighbourhood schools. The goal of Education for All (EFA) also calls for
‘inclusion’ to be the norm. Inclusive education gained momentum since the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in 1994. At the same time ‘inclusion’ has been the focus of researchers in the recent past.

It was found from the studies conducted in India that, Government of Maharashtra made no assessment about the facilities available to disabled children for their education. No monitoring cell had been set up to implement, monitor and evaluate the work under the scheme (Rane, 1983). Facilities available in the school were not enjoyed by the students for whom these facilities have been provided in Bihar (Singh and Prava, 1987). Parents of disabled children have actual interest in inclusive education and they want their children to get education with normal children, whereas some of the parents of normal children do not like to take chance with inclusive education, although they have opted for inclusive education (Nayak, 2008).

Studies conducted by Pathy (2010) found that pre-service trainees had positive attitude towards inclusive education with regard to inclusion of children with special needs, majority of pre-service trainees were ambivalent towards mainstreaming, a majority of pre-service trainees need for special skills to deal with children with special needs, majority of the respondents felt that there is a need for special resources to teach in inclusive classes and pre-service trainees responded more positively towards children with special needs. DPEP is seen as a laudable step by the Government of India in promoting Inclusive Education, but much more needs to follow if we have to make Inclusive Education a reality in the coming decades (Unnikrishnan, 2010). Distance education system should aim at providing improved access to the needy and underprivileged sections of the society. In backward and distant areas, schools or colleges may be identified for setting up information office for creating additional
awareness about distance education programmes (Swamy, 2011). Relatively poor scholastic performance of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students in Sarva Shishka Abhiyan (SSA) school was found due to factors like the combined classrooms, non-use of available amplification devices, and teachers’ disorientation towards itinerant teachers’ intervention (Upadhyay, 2012).

Similarly, studies conducted abroad focuses on the philosophy of educating students with moderate to severe disabilities in neighborhood schools and even educating student with disabilities in regular classrooms has increasingly become recognized nationally as the best educational practice (Davis, 1994). The study conducted by Afzali (1995) pointed out that many deaf educators and parents of deaf children believed that the purpose of educating these students is to teach them to function in a non-hearing society. Studies conducted by Freeman & Alkin (2000) had pointed that parents believe that students with severe disabilities who were included in regular classroom settings would be rejected socially. Even when parents believed inclusion to have beneficial social implications, they still maintained that those with severe disabilities would be rejected. Principals appeared to have positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in all categories surveyed, with the exception of students with the most severe disabilities (Maricle, 2001). Parents were more concerned about the degree to which their children’s Individual Education Plan/Programme (IEP) actually addressed the needs of their children when they were being educated in an inclusive setting, as opposed to a segregated setting (Daniel and King, 2007). ‘In their study Smith & Tyler (2011) have revealed that, web-based units on effective practices will give both current and future teachers the tools they need to educate every student effectively. Teachers possess
positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools but expressed reservations about including all students, especially those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Khochen & Radford, 2012).

Research studies, which have been conducted earlier, leave a gap that needs to be filled in. It is not enough to study the attitudes of regular education teachers, special education teachers, principals and administrators towards inclusive education. Exploring and understanding of opinions of parents and administrators are also equally important. In our country very few researches have been conducted so far to study the practices of inclusive education at primary level. Although inclusive education was implemented by the Government of Orissa since 2002-03, there is no systematic study to explore and find out the status of inclusive education practices from academic, social and administrative points of view. Therefore a study on the inclusive education practices at primary level in Orissa was undertaken.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study attempts to address the following questions

1. What are inclusive education practices in regular school environment at primary level?

2. What are the Administrative, Social and Academic problems being faced in inclusive education setting at primary level?

3. What types of changes have been made in the existing primary school in terms of physical infrastructure, curriculum aspect, teacher competencies and leadership roles?
4. What types of steps have been taken with respect to resource management, commitment, vision of the schools, restructuring and staff development during 10 years of launch of Inclusive Education?

5. To what extent inclusive education is accepted by the mainstream schools in our democratic set up?

6. What attitude do the teachers possess towards children with special needs and other children in inclusive education setting at primary level?

7. What are the barriers to inclusive education and how these can be addressed properly?

8. What are the differences in practices being carried out for inclusive education in rural and urban areas?

9. What are the opinions of parents of the children with and without special needs towards inclusion?

1.9 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“A STUDY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES FOR THE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AT PRIMARY LEVEL IN ORISSA”.

1.10 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Keeping in view of the problem for the present study, the following objectives have been framed.

1. To study the implementation of various aspects of inclusive education practices at primary level during 2000-2009.
2. To study the inclusive education practices (curricular and co-curricular) adopted by teachers to deal with special needs students and other students in inclusive education setting.

3. To compare the inclusive education practices in rural schools with inclusive education practices in urban schools.

4. To study the opinions of parents of children with and without special needs towards inclusion.

1.11 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

For the present investigation, inclusive education means the provision of services to the students with special needs in their neighborhood schools with necessary support services and supplementary aids for both students and teachers. It means meeting the requirements of children with special needs for free and quality public education in the least restrictive and most effective environment.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with special needs are those who deviate from the norm in mental or physical characteristics to such an extent that they require a modification in school practices or special education services in order to develop to their maximum capacities.

PRIMARY LEVEL

In Orissa grade/class I to V in a school is known as primary level. The above definition of primary level of education is taken for the present study.
1.12 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to

– Inclusive primary schools in seven districts of Orissa.
– The period from 2000 to 2009.
– Children with specific needs only in the five categories and they are children with Visual Impairment (VI), Hearing Impairment (HI), Mental Retardation (MR), Orthopedic Handicap (OH) and Learning Disability (LD).