in environment, which is best suited to his/her learning needs. These include special schools, and even home based education. It is necessary to provide special supports services for children with special needs to reach their full potential in school, and can make a successful transaction to adulthood and the world of further and higher education. It is very important to study children with special needs and their support services and provide them education according to their needs so that they can fully develop their potential and the target of universalization of Education for all children be achieved and fulfill the purpose of education to ensure that all students gain access to knowledge, skills, and information. The above facts have made the study more relevant as it would be helpful in revealing more facts and details of support services i.e. Academic support, Administrative support, Parental support, Community and Peer support provided to the children with special needs for the successful completion of their education in school. Dr.J.P.Singh and Dr. M.K. Dash found through their research that about 90% of the children with disabilities are mildly or moderately disabled. They can be offered education by general teacher who receives adequate training. Only 10% of the disabled children need attention from specially qualified teachers.

Provision of support services is very important for the success of education of children with special needs. Within schools, children with special needs should receive whatever extra support they require to ensure their effective education and inclusive education is one of the most effective means for building solidarity between children with special needs and their peers. The educational team should share the responsibility for the education of special needs children. Parents and volunteers should be invited to take an active part in the work of the school. Teachers, however play a key role as managers of the education process, supporting children through the use of available resources both within and outside of the classroom.
The central purpose becomes more challenging as schools accommodate students with increasingly diverse backgrounds and abilities. As we strive to meet these challenges, the involvement and cooperation of educators, parents, and community leaders is vital for the creation of better and more inclusive schools. Thus this study is the need of the hour and is an effort to study the support services for children with special needs in elementary schools of Punjab.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

“A Study of Support Services for children with special needs in Elementary Schools of Punjab”.

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED**

**Support Services**- Support services are the additional services provided to children with special needs to meet their educational needs in schools.

**Administrative support** to children with special needs provided by Government and the school.

**Academic support** provided by teachers to children with special needs in the school.

**Parental support** given by parents to children with special needs.

**Peer support** given by the peers of children with special needs in the school.

**Community support** given by community members to children with special needs.

**Children with Special Needs**- Children with special needs are those who differ from the average to such a degree in physical or psychological characteristics, that school programs designed for the majority of children do not afford them opportunity for all round adjustment and optimum progress, and who therefore need either special instruction or in some cases special ancillary services, or both, to achieve a level commensurate with their respective abilities.

According to NCERT “A child has special educational needs if s/he has difficulty in learning. This requires special educational provision to be made for her/him. A child have learning difficulty because of a
disability which hinders him/her from making use of the existing educational facilities provided for all other children of his/her class. A child has learning difficulty because of some other reasons too”.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

9. To present the status of inclusive education to children with special needs in the Malwa belt of Punjab.

10. To study the various support services required for children with special needs for their successful completion of elementary education.

11. To ascertain the academic support provided to children with special needs in the elementary schools.

12. To study the administrative support given to the elementary schools for education of children with special needs.

13. To study the support given by the parents to their children with special needs.

14. To ascertain the community support for the education of children with special needs in elementary schools.

15. To study the support given by Peers to children with special needs in elementary schools.

16. To study the difference in support services for children with special needs in Malwa belt of Punjab.

**DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

5. The present study will be confined to elementary schools in the Malwa belt of Punjab.

6. The study will be delimited to four districts of Malwa region of Punjab.

7. Only Government elementary schools having resource rooms will be taken for the study.

8. The study will be delimited to visually impaired, orthopedically impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded and learning disabled.
METHODOLOGY

The descriptive method of research was employed for the present study to study the support services for children with special needs in elementary schools of Punjab.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY AND SAMPLING

The headmasters/ headmistress and teachers of elementary school constitute the universe of the study. Mixed sampling i.e. random and purposive sampling was used by the researcher. Due to paucity of time, Out of the 11 districts of malwa belt the data was collected from the elementary schools of only four districts on the basis of literacy rate (two districts i.e. Patiala and Fatehgarh sahib having high literacy rate and two districts i.e. Sangrur and Mansa having low literacy rate) were selected randomly. Since the present study aims to know the support services for children with special needs, investigator identified the elementary schools by taking information from Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) office in all the four districts which has resource centers as a part of elementary schools. In order to conduct the present study the investigator collected data from 235 schools having resource centers under Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) from four districts comprising of 235 headmasters/ headmistress and 975 teachers.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOLS USED

Since no standardized questionnaire was available to study the support services for children with special needs in elementary schools of Punjab, the investigator prepared two self structured questionnaires to collect authentic, genuine information from Headmasters/ headmistress and teachers in Government elementary schools of four districts of Malwa belt carrying out inclusive education under Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

Development of tools

Framing of a good questionnaire takes a great deal of time and hard work. In order to make the study reliable and comprehensive the questionnaire was prepared by the investigator. On the basis of study of literatures i.e. books, journals, and discussion with experts,
headmasters and teachers dealing with children with special needs in special schools a list of items was prepared separately for each questionnaire.

While constructing the questionnaire, the following steps were used by the investigator.

Step-1 Planning the questionnaire
Step-2 Preparing the first draft of the questionnaire
Step-3 Establishing the content validity and reliability of the questionnaire
Step-4 Preparing the final draft of the questionnaire

**Step- 1: Planning the questionnaires**

Planning is one of the essential steps for the construction of the questionnaire. According to Stanley and Hopkins (1978), the Planning stage of the questionnaire includes the nature of the test, test items and statements of condition under which it will be administered. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, the investigator had prepared two questionnaires; one is School Information cum interview Schedule i.e. for headmasters and another questionnaire for teachers.

**Step- 2: Preparing the first draft of the questionnaire**

The investigator initially prepared 18 items for knowing current status of inclusive education and support services in four districts of Malwa belt from Headmasters/headmistress. The investigator also prepared Questionnaire for teachers keeping in mind the Barrier free access (BFA) guidelines, curriculum guidelines, evaluation techniques guideline given by Ministry of human resource development under the Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) project. The questionnaire contained three parts-Parts A, B, C. Part A constituted items pertaining to general information about teachers. Part B constituted information regarding aids and equipments and instructional material required for Children with special needs having 5 items with sub parts and Part C constituted 50 items dealing with different support services for namely administrative support, Academic support, Peer support, Parental support and Community support required for children with special
needs. For screening the statements thus collected, the list was analyzed in consultation with the Guide and criteria suggested by Likert (1938), Edwards and Kilpatric (1948) and Edwards (1957) were applied. The few suggestions of the criterion that was followed were:

1. A statement should refer more to the prevailing condition than to the past.
2. A statement should be clear, precise and straightforward.
3. A statement should contain one complete thought.
4. A statement should be well worded as can be easily understood by subjects.
5. A statement should not be irrelevant to the topic.

So keeping in mind these suggestions care was taken that the language of the test items was unambiguous and the instructions were clear and simple.

**Step- 3 Establishing the content validity and reliability of the questionnaire**

Validity refers to the degree to which it measure accurately what it intends to measure. Mouly (1971) remarked that the validity of the test must be established prior to its use; validation is an aspect of development, not of its use in the solution of the problem. The validation of the questionnaire utilizes the same principles and procedure to the validation of any tool of measurement. Each question or statement must be related to topic under investigation. Content validity is determined by showing that the behavior demonstrated in testing constitute a representative sample of behaviours to be exhibited in a desired performance domain. For the present questionnaires, content validity was established on the basis of the coverage of the universe of the test items. It was done by taking different views regarding the items in the questionnaire. 10 Experts from the field of Psychology, Special education, research scholars, Teachers dealing with children with special needs in special schools gave their views and suggestions. Experts gave suggestions like item needs modification; question should be reframed, omitting irrelevant
statements in the questionnaires. Depending upon the suggestions received, some of the items in the questionnaire were revised and refined and to know the reliability of the questionnaire, Pilot study was conducted by the investigator to know the accuracy of the tools for headmasters / headmistress and teachers prepared by the researcher. A Sample of 25 headmasters/headmistress and 50 teachers was administered the questionnaire to check the accuracy of the questionnaires. These samples were not included in the final study. Split half method was used to check the reliability of the questionnaire for teachers. For Administrative support, Academic support, Parental Support, Peer support and Community support, spearman’s brown formula was used for checking the reliability. Coefficient of correlation after calculating for administrative support was 0.77, Academic support 0.70, Parents support 0.60, Peer support 0.63 and community support 0.60. As the values were more than 0.50, The statements having less than 0.60 values were deleted from the questionnaire for teachers.

**Step- 4 Preparing the final draft of the questionnaires on the basis of suggestions given by the experts**

After obtaining their views from the experts and checking its reliability, the final version of tools was prepared for use by investigator in the research. The final version of school information cum interview schedule for headmasters/ headmistress consisted of 15 questions and questionnaire for teachers consisted of 45 items. Some of the statements had two options either in Yes or No. The respondents were asked to tick (√) one of the options as per their choice and some were open-ended in nature in school information cum interview schedule for headmasters/Headmistress and Part A and Part B of the questionnaire. The investigator used Summated scale or popularly known as Likert type scales for item analysis wherein a particular item is evaluated on the basis of how well it discriminates between those persons whose total score is high and those whose total score is low. So the investigator used those items or
statements that best meet this sort of discrimination test are included in the final version of questionnaire. Part C of the questionnaire on teachers comprised of the statements and the respondent was to respond on four point scale i.e. (i) Always, (ii) Sometimes, (iii) Rarely, (iv) Never

DESCRIPTION OF TOOLS

1. School Information cum interview schedule for Headmasters / Headmistress: The School Information cum interview schedule was designed for Headmasters. This Schedule consists of only one part which deals with general information about the school and support services, i.e. types of children with special needs, Identification and enrolment of CWSN, Type of degree of disability of CWSN, reasons of dropout, attitude of teachers towards and Finance etc.

2. Questionnaire for Teachers: Questionnaire for teachers was prepared to know the various support services for children with special needs. The questionnaire was divided into three parts A, B, C. Part A dealing with general information about teachers like- name, age, school, experience etc.

Part B dealing with various aids and equipments and instructional aids provided to different categories of children with special needs to fulfill the second objective of the study.

Part C dealing with different support services comprising of 45 items provided to children with special needs.

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

First of all the investigator went to Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) office of the respective districts and collected the information about number of Government elementary schools under SSA Project and the number of schools having resource centers for children with special needs.

In the second phase the investigator visited all the schools district wise and met respective Headmasters and acquainted them about the subject and requested them to fill the questions contained in the schedule. In order to get relevant responses of teachers and
Headmasters, they were first convinced that the information provided by them will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of research work. The investigator gave the information cum interview schedule to headmasters. They were first asked to fill the school information and then interviewed to get genuine information about status of inclusive education and then the researcher met selected teachers and requested them to fill the questionnaire and asked them to express their views and answers without any hesitation and pressure. The investigator gave a brief description about the questionnaire to the teachers at the beginning. They were told the objectives of the study and motivated to give their responses. Then the questionnaire were distributed among the teachers and the questionnaire were got filled on the spot. At last she thanked the Headmasters/ headmistress and teachers for their kind cooperation. In this way the investigator collected the data. It is to be mentioned here that the investigator collected the data from schools in 2011-12.

**SCORING OF THE DATA**

After collecting the data scoring was done. The school information schedule for headmasters /headmistress was calculated with the help of percentages to fulfill the first objective. The questionnaire for teachers constituted Part A, B, C. Part A and B were calculated with the help of percentages only whereas for Part C scoring was done. Out of 45 items 14 items are negatively stated and 31 items are positively stated. Each of the item is assigned a weight ranging from 4 (always) to 1 (never) for positive items. In case of negative item range of weights is reversed i.e. from 1(always) to 4 (never). So in this way the score of an individual is the sum total of the scores. The range of the scores is from 45 to 180 with higher score indicating higher level of support services provided to children with special needs and low score indicating lower level of support services provided to children with special needs.
STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA USED

The data were analyzed by calculating the frequencies and percentage item wise keeping in view each objective of the study. Bar Graphs and Pie charts were used wherever necessary. Simple percentages and scoring were used for quantifying the qualitative variables. The total score of Part c of questionnaire for teachers was calculated using Mean and ANOVA to find out the significance of mean difference of support services provided to children with special needs in elementary schools of four districts of Malwa belt of Punjab. Apart from this multiple comparisons was also done using Post hoc test by Tukey’s Kramer test to find out the significantly different districts in providing different support services.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Major findings:

Present status of inclusive education

1. Inclusive education started in the session 2004-05 in four districts of Malwa belt of Punjab. There were 20061 children with special needs were identified in the elementary schools in the session 2011-2012. Out of which 7071 were identified in Patiala District, 5350 in Sangrur district, 4400 in Fatehgarh sahib district and 3240 children with special needs were identified in Mansa district. All these children were identified and enrolled in private schools, Special schools, Aanganwadis, Education guarantee scheme (EGS), under Alternative innovative education (AIE) centers.

2. Out of the total children identified 61.74% were boys and 38.25% were girls having special needs.

3. It was observed that overall percentage of orthopedically impaired and mentally retarded children is more i.e. 22.67% and 20.60% followed by visually impaired with 18.92% in elementary schools of four districts of Malwa belt as compared to hearing impaired with 13.41%, Multiple disability children 7.23% and Cerebral palsy 3.14%.
4. There were 46.81% of children with mild degree of disability, 35.50% were having moderate degree of disability while only 15.15% and 2.41% were having severe and profound degree of disability in four districts.

5. Out of 20061 children identified with special needs only 2448 i.e. 12.20% children with special needs are enrolled in resource rooms having moderate or severe disability. It was also observed that children having mild disability are generally included in classrooms and children with profound disability are provided home based education (HBE).

6. There were 79 Inclusive education resource teachers and 257 volunteers working under Sarv Shiksha abhiyan project to teach children with special education in different blocks of four districts.

7. It was noted that 39.14% children with special needs were identified on day to day observation of child’s progress and difficulties and 31.9 % on Parents reports whereas 19.14% said that both Parents reports and day to day observation and only 9.78 % said based on the guidelines given by Sarv Shiksha abhiyan (SSA).

8. 41.70% Headmaster’s / headmistress reported that children with special needs are directly included in the regular classroom whereas 43.40 % reported that child is placed in Part time resource room and part time in regular class room and 8.51% said that child is sent for preparation in the special school and 6.38% in preparatory class.

9. 31.48% headmasters/headmistress said that reason of dropout of the child with special needs is due to lack of motivation of child, lack of Parental support 19.14%, lack of interest of teachers 8.08%, lack of Peer support 28.5% and 12.7% is due to lack of community support.

10. 59.57% headmasters/headmistress reported that they are not provided financial assistance by the Government and 40.42% said that finances are provided by the Government. Although almost 40.42% percentage of Headmasters/ headmistress reported that they
get financial assistance from Government and sometimes from other sources like Non Governmental organizations (N.G.O’s) but still it was felt by them that those finances are not enough to meet the demands of children with special needs.

11. 57.8% headmasters reported that resource teachers/ inclusive education coordinators visit once in a week, 17.02% once in fortnight and 25.10% once in a month. It was reported that inclusive education coordinators also visit sometimes to school to assess the requirement of children with special needs along with Doctor and physiotherapist.

12. 55% of headmasters reported that teachers have positive attitude towards teachers and 28.51% have negative attitude towards children whereas very less reported to have indifferent attitude towards children with special needs.

13. 45.95% headmasters/headmistress reported that Physical infrastructure was according to the needs of the children and 54.04% said that it was not according to the needs of children with special needs like Ramps, toilets, leveled pathways and playgrounds, drinking water facility, proper furniture, natural lighting, steps of equal and even height etc. for barrier free access to education to children with special needs.

**Instructional material, Aids and equipments as support provided to children with special needs in elementary schools.**

14. 27.69% teachers said that tactile and embossed teaching learning material is available for visually impaired, 25.64% said large print material is available for low vision children, only 12.30 % said that Braille is available for blind children and 20.30% said that there was no availability of equipments in the schools.

15. 44.10% teachers said that TLM (teaching learning material is available for children), 12.30% agreed that there is availability of hearing aids whereas only 2.35% teachers used sign language to teach children with special needs and 41.2% said that there was no availability of equipments.
16. 29.53% said that wheel chair is made available to children with special needs where as only 2.15% said that special chair is made available and 4.30% said that there is no availability of equipments for orthopedically impaired.

17. There was no provision of taped text material for learning disabled and 25.64% said that large print material was available whereas 28.41% said that there was no availability of any aid and equipment.

18. 30.25% agreed that pictorial aids were available, 46.15% teachers said that there was no availability of aids and equipment for mentally retarded children.

**Overall Statement wise analysis of different types of support services provided to children with special needs**

**Administrative support**

19. It was found that 54.97% of the teachers reported that the school facilitates the admission of children with special needs. 30.25% teachers also reported that there is direct link of school plan and teaching learning programme for children with special needs. 24.51% teachers reported that there is no facility of taking child from home to school and from school to home. 24.41% teachers reported that they do not have access to curriculum guidelines to support children with special needs.37.43% of the teachers reported that the administration make arrangements for specialists (Psychologists, Physiotherapists) to assist teachers for children with special needs.35.48% of the teachers reported that school actively promotes parental involvement in educating children with special needs.34.46 % teachers reported that school provide safe and stimulating environment for children with special needs. Only 9.74% teachers reported that curricular and co curricular activities are organized in the school to encourage children with special needs.45.23% reported that teachers do not get any helper in handling children with special needs.45.84% reported that Government does not provide sufficient funds for adaptation to physical environment of schools for children with special needs which
is the basic requirement of children with special needs for entry into the school. The following study revealed some interesting facts of administrative support conducted by *Singh and Prabha (1987)* evaluated integrated educational facilities for physically handicapped in the schools of Bihar showing different picture of administrative support. The facilities granted by the Government were not availed of by the schools. The facilities available in the schools were not enjoyed by the students for whom they had been provided. The schools were utilizing only 33 percent of the resources allotted for this purpose. The admission policy was also defective.

**Academic support**

20. 47.28% of the teachers reported that they simplify the content according to the need of the differently abled children. 45.02% teachers reported that they meet the academic requirement of the children with special needs apart from having heavy work load whereas 35.15 % agreed with the statement. 42.9% teachers reported that they discuss about the requirement of children with special needs from their parents. 31.2% teachers reported that they provide specialized help to children with special needs through resource rooms in school. Only 6.46% of the teachers reported that they undergo in-service training related to children with special needs in the school. Only 15.7 % of the teachers reported that they provide extra coaching to child with special needs after school. Whereas only 17.33 % of the teachers consult special educators about the condition of the child whenever they come to school. The above results are in consonance with the study conducted by *Ali, Mustapha* and *Jelas (2006)* that examined the attitude and perceived knowledge of mainstream and special education teachers of primary and secondary schools towards inclusive education in Malaysia. The findings of the study show that collaboration between the mainstream and the special education teachers is important for providing academic support to children with special needs.
**Parental support**

21. It was reported by the teachers that 30.76% Parents have positive hopes for the future of their child with special need. 33.3% reported that Parents do not understand their child’s capabilities. Only 29.12% Parents involve themselves actively in the education of children with special needs. 28% teachers agree with the statement that parents do not understand the capabilities of their child. 32.9% teachers reported that Parents do not cooperate with teachers in meeting the educational needs of their child with special needs. 43% of the teachers reported that Parents are not aware of the facilities provided by the administration to children with special needs. The study conducted by **Al Shammari (2008)** shows the importance of Parental support for children with special needs. The researcher investigated the extent of parental involvement in improving students’ level in special education programs in Kuwait and found that the students’ progress recorded a significant influence from their parents’ involvement in their special education programmes. Most of the parents of these students with special needs actively participated in school meetings and followed their children’s progress in the special education programmes. Parents also agreed that their children benefited through these special education programmes and their level of progress improved based on parental involvement, school plans, and the special education teachers’ strategies of engaging parents in meetings, activities, projects and decisions. Thus it may be concluded from the above results that Parents support range from acceptance and over-protection and even to that of denial or rejection.

**Community support**

22. 32.6% teachers reported that community helps in mobilizing funds for the development of school for the education of children with special needs. 30.6% teachers also reported that community also provides aids and equipments and instructional material required for children with special needs. Only 13.8% reported that community helps the teachers in supervising and giving them feedback in
improving their performance to teach children with special needs. 38.05% reported that no sponsorships are provided to children with special needs by community. 34.8% of the teachers reported that community involves themselves in awareness programmes for children with special needs. Only 23.5% teachers reported that community makes arrangements for extracurricular activities. 51.8% teachers reported that community never motivates parents of children with special needs for enrolment in school.

**Peer support**

23. 38.15% teachers reported that normal children provide tutoring to children with special need when they ask them. 35.79% teachers reported that normal children like to sit with differently abled children. 29.12% teachers reported that normal children accept children with special needs in the classroom. 30.87% of the teachers reported that normal children make friendship with differently abled children very easily. It is clear from the above result on peer support that only 29.12% teachers found and reported that normal children accept differently abled children in the classrooms it was observed that once they accept them, they like to sit with them, make friendships, and play with them and provide tutoring also. **Rai (1991)** did a study on cooperation-based learning strategies for disabled and non-disabled children in integrated setting. It was found that cooperative learning experiences promote a close relationship between the disabled and non-disabled. When learning situations are structured cooperatively and they worked together, they interact in positive ways, feel supported and encouraged.

**Comparison of support services for children with special needs in four districts**

**Administrative support**

24. In Patiala district administrative support was more as compared to other three districts i.e. Mansa, Fatehgarh sahib and Sangrur. Out of these three districts Sangrur district having less mean value showed less administrative support for children with special needs.
**Academic support**

25. Academic support for children with special needs in Fatehgarh district was more than other districts. Patiala and Mansa districts showed similar Academic support whereas in Sangrur district Academic support was very less.

**Parental support**

26. Parents support for children with special needs as reported by teachers was more in Patiala district As compared to other three districts that showed similar support with Sangrur Showing very less Parents support.

**Peer support**

27. In Patiala district more peer support was reported followed by Fatehgarh Sahib whereas Peer support was very less in Mansa and Sangrur districts.

**Community support**

28. Community support was more in Patiala followed by Mansa and Fatehgarh sahib and lowest in Sangrur district.

**Support services in all the four districts provided to children with special needs**

29. Overall result indicated that out of all the support services studied for children with special needs, it was found that for academic support maximum score lies above the mean value i.e. 46.6% in the range of 31.5-51.5.40% of them being in the lower range of 11.5- 26.5 and only 13.3% fall in the average range thus indicating that high academic support provided to children with special needs. **Administrative support was less** as maximum score fall in the lower range of 12.5- 32.5 below mean value i.e. 48.4%, 17.9% average range and 33.7% in the higher range of 37.5 – 52.5 thus indicating that only 33.7% of Administrative support is provided to children with special needs. In Parents support maximum frequencies lie in the lower range of 5.5- 14.5 below mean value i.e. 46.1% whereas only 15.7% indicated high parents support in the range of 19.5- 24.5. 38.2% lie in the average range of 14.5- 19.5 which was 38.2%
showed **low parents support provided to children with special needs in all the four districts.** In peer support maximum score was in the mean value i.e. 39.3% i.e. 14.5-19.5. 35.6% of them being in the lower range of 5.5-14.5 and only 25.1% fall in the high range of 20.5-25.5, thus indicating that **average peer support is provided to children with special needs** and for community support The maximum frequencies lie in the low range of 7.5-17.5 i.e. 39.2%. 30.5% in the high range of 22.5-32.5. So the **results indicated that high community support is not provided to children with special needs.**

**5.3 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

1. The administrators and policy makers should frame policies and laws in such a manner that maximum opportunity should be made available for children with special needs and they can have access to regular classroom, where they get plenty of opportunities to utilize their potentialities to the fullest possible extent. Government should provide more instructional materials, aids and equipments in the schools to improve the education of children with special needs. More funds should be utilized by the Government to build necessary physical infrastructure for children with special needs for barrier free access to schools which is the basic requirement for entry into school. Apart from this Administration should take measures to monitor the process of providing education to children with special needs at home i.e. Home based education (HBE) and they should also make provision of resource rooms in such a manner that teachers get specialized help through resource rooms to educate children with special needs.

2. The present study bears implications for parents. The study has revealed that there is less of parental support for children with special needs. Parents of children with special needs should exhibit positive hopes for the future of their children and feel comfortable in sending their child in regular classroom rather than placing them in segregated setting. They should understand the capabilities of their child. They should cooperate, involve themselves actively and discuss
problems of their child with teachers in meeting their educational needs. Most of the educationists emphasize the role of parents in the education and training process of children with special needs and it can only be done through training of parents, providing them opportunities to interact with teachers so that they can provide more support to their child with special need and create a conducive and healthy environment in the home. Parents awareness drives should also be organized by the Government as it was found that most of the parents were not aware of the facilities provided by the Government for their child with special needs.

3. The present study also indicated less percentage of peer support in schools. Peer support plays a very vital role in improving the attendance and academic performance of children with special needs. Peer support encourages both those being helped and the helpers to develop personal and social skills, such as communication skills; improving self-esteem; learning to negotiate with one another. There is need for Peer orientation by the teachers. Normal children should be encouraged by the teachers to make children with special needs, their friends. Teacher should assign them group activities where normal children should cooperate with children with special needs.

4. The present study also indicated positive attitude and more academic support by teachers to children with special needs. It can be improved further if teachers are given in service training in educating children with special needs so that they can modify their teaching methodologies according to their needs. The general teacher and special teacher should work in co-ordination rather than an isolated professional. The teachers should be provided with the guidelines for adjustment to the curriculum, adaptation of instructional materials and provided specialized help through resource rooms.

5. The successful education of children with special needs is not only the task of the Government and school alone. It requires the cooperation of families, community support, voluntary organizations and public at large as well. Community including organizations of
person with disabilities youth clubs, potential of elderly people and other non Governmental organizations should be empowered to take the responsibility of the awareness programmes for children with special needs. They should make arrangements for extracurricular activities like sports and cultural programmes to encourage them. Community members should also motivate parents to send their child to go to school and encourage out of school child to attend school. They should supervise and give feedback to the teachers to improve their performance. Instructional material and aids and equipments required by the children can also be provided by the community members to support them in completing their education.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research in any field is a continuous process and no research in itself is considered complete. Every research lays down the foundation for a new study. The present study was delimited in terms of area of study, type of school i.e. government schools and grade level i.e. elementary level to study the support services for children with special needs. Hence the following suggestions are made for further research.

1. The present study was undertaken in elementary schools to study the support services for children with special needs. This study may be extended to high and secondary level and even up to colleges.
2. The present study was confined to four districts of Malwa belt. Larger sample can be taken up in future research.
3. Similar study can be conducted on private and government schools of all the districts of Punjab.
4. The role of voluntary agencies and non- governmental organization need to be evaluated in educating the children with special needs at elementary stage in Punjab and other states of the country.
5. A comparative study can be conducted to study the support services for children with special needs in Punjab with other states of the country.
6. A study of various programmes and policies being provided by the Government to support children with special needs in schools can also be conducted.

7. A comparative study of teachers having specialized training with those having no specialized training can also be done so that new training programmes can be developed for successful implementation of inclusion in schools.

8. A study to find out the effect of peer support on the academic achievement of children with special needs in schools can also be conducted.

9. A detailed study of various aids and equipments required and supplied to children with regard to specific disability can be carried out.