CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Who Are Physically Handicapped?

In every society along with the normal, there exists a distinct section or class of children whose number depends on different socio-economic conditions of the society. During the developmental process from conception and after birth, the human organism is interfered with by many factors for which in the growth process the human being may have certain exceptional traits and certain deviations which are quite different from the average and the normal. These deviations may be both physical and mental. So the exceptional child is one who deviates intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally so much from what is considered to be normal growth and development that he cannot derive maximum benefit from a conventional programme of education and training and requires a special class or supplementary institutions. The exceptional children can be categorised as follows:

Gifted, physically handicapped, mentally handicapped or retarded, emotionally handicapped and socially handicapped. In a broader framework, the handicapped or the disabled includes both physically and mentally handicapped persons:
the deaf, the dumb, the orthopaedically deformed, mentally retarded or deficient and also those who are suffering from diseases such as Polio, Leprosy etc. In general, such disability prevents the normal functioning of their faculties in relation to their role performance, personal and social adjustments and Psychic experience. A handicapped person is thus at a disadvantage caused by an impairment of one or more organs of an individual and affects his activities - physical, mental, social, psychological and vocational. The degree to which an individual is handicapped depends on the extent and nature of his physical and mental disability and social definition given to his impairment. The definition of a disabled person is given by the United Nations as follows. "A person unable to ensure by himself or herself wholly or partly the necessities of normal individual and social life as a result of deficiency either congenital or not in his or her physical or mental capabilities".\(^1\)

World Health Organization has laid down the following definition. "Impairment is defined as any deviation from the normal which results in defective functions, structures or

development of the whole, therefore impairment is any loss or a missing or defective body part or abnormality of psychological, physical or anatomical structure or function which leads to the decrease of independence of mobility etc. Disability is any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.²

The physically handicapped are the blind, the deaf and dumb and the orthopaedically handicapped. The blind are those who suffer from either of the following conditions.

(a) Total absence of sight

(b) Visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with correcting lenses. A visual acuity of 20/200 means that the child reads from a distance of 20 feet a line or words which a child with normal vision can read from a distance of 200 feet.

(c) Limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degrees or less.

The deaf are those in whom the sense of hearing is

²WHO Regional Committee for South East Asia - Final Report and Minutes of the Meetings of the Twenty Eight Session - New Delhi 25-30 August, 1975 : WHO Regional Office for South East Asia, New Delhi.
non-functional for ordinary purposes of life. Generally, a loss of hearing at 70 (dB)* decibels or above at 500, 1000 or 2000 frequencies will make residual hearing non-functional.

The orthopaedically handicapped are those who have a physical defect or deformity which causes an undue interference with normal functioning of the bones, muscles and joints.

1.2 India And Her Physically Handicapped Persons

It is estimated that nearly 500 million people in the world are handicapped. Out of the 500 million people in the world, a population which is much more than that of entire Africa or the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. combined, a staggering number of over 300 million live in the developing countries alone.\(^3\) Annually another 15 million are added as victims of war, accidents, malnutrition and diseases.

Let us take Indian figures. According to the survey (1971) carried out by the Indian Council of Medical Research, there are 30 lakhs mentally retarded, 90 lakhs deaf and dumb

\*dB refers to "decibel" which is logarithmic unit of sound intensity above an arbitrary reference. In this study reference is normal hearing (0dB).

and 60 lakhs blind in India. What is more a cause of concern is that the incidence of blindness in India is increasing year by year. The greatest tragedy of the blind is that nearly 70% of the cases could have been cured if proper care was taken in time and the major causes of blindness are lack of timely medical facilities, malnutrition, insanitary conditions, ignorance, superstitions etc.\(^4\)

Each year in India, 1500 children go blind before they reach their sixth birth day as a result of Vit. A and Protein deficiency. About 5 million people go blind from cataract which incidentally, takes only three minutes to be removed by simple surgery. According to a sample survey conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research, about 30,000 children go blind annually due to Vit. A deficiency.

Though, there are no reliable statistics regarding the blind population yet it is assumed from various sources that the number of blind in India is about 9 million and visually handicapped is about 43 million. As per the National sample survey data of 1960-’61, it was estimated that there were 5,30,000 deaf and mute persons in India out of which 4,68,000

\(^4\)All India Directory of Welfare agencies for the blind’. The Central Institute of Research and Training in Public Co-operation, New Delhi, p. 3.
were in the rural areas and only 62,000 in the urban areas. The Encyclopaedia of social work in India (Vol. 2) published in 1968 by the publication division puts the total figure of deaf persons at 2,43,700. Dr. W.W. Taylor and T.W. Taylor in the book "Services for Handicapped in India" (1970) puts the figure of deaf persons at about 2000,000. Out of this total number about 400,000 are children of school going age. Again the National Sample Survey conducted in 1970, revealed that the number of totally deaf and dumb persons are 600,000 to 700,000. Recent researches in this regard point out that in India, out of that about 15 million school children suffer from loss of hearing ability which requires immediate attention and treatment. It is particularly distressing to note that about 12 million or two percent of Indian population are physically handicapped. Every year an estimated number of two lakhs of children are disabled because of poliomyelitis, a disease responsible for 80 percent of all orthopaedic handicaps in the country. According to the 1981 census there are about 28 million handicapped in the country (12 million physically handicapped, and 16 million mentally retarded). However, the


number of the handicapped persons can be put in the Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Handicapped Persons</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physically handicapped with severe physical disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visually handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impaired hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentally retarded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 **Development Of Human Attitude And Education For The Handicapped**

(Historical account-pre-independence period)

Tracing the evolution of humane attitude to the handicapped, A.R. Wadia mentioned three stages. In the old

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age, there was total rejection of the handicapped as illustrated in the extreme cases of Sparta where the physically handicapped infant was exposed to natural elements and left to die. So, throughout the ages, the child with a handicap has been a concern to his parent and to the society. In primitive societies, such a child unable to withstand the hazards of nature was eliminated early in life. Wherever superstitions and ignorance prevailed such a child was believed to be possessed by the devil or cursed by the gods. It has been a common belief among the people in the past that blindness was a result of past sins of blind persons and God has rightly punished the person by making him blind. So any attempt to ameliorate the conditions will amount to interference in the justice of the Almighty. This misunderstanding of the 'Theory of Karma' segregated the blind from the society and neglected for long. However, the earliest medical books record of 26 different disorders of the eye and their treatment shows clearly that people knew about blindness and understood it.

The second phase was that of the acceptance of the handicapped by the society. With the development of a liberal outlook of social and religious concepts, they were accorded special care and attention. The teachings of great religious leaders mention of the utmost compassion they had for some
unfortunately. In India during Ashoka's and Harshawardhana's time, kings used to give alms and protection to the handicapped. Kings used to keep aside certain percentage of the revenue for their welfare. There were also some references in history which indicate that the deaf were employed as spies, confidential clerks, court jesters etc.\textsuperscript{8}

The ancient kings of as early as 4th century B.C. thought about rehabilitating the blind by way of giving them employments. Lord Budha preached pity for the blind and among the Buddhist kings, Ashoka put his preachings into practice by establishing hospitals and asylums. The blind enjoyed the right to inherit the paternal property as mentioned in the famous text of Kautilya on Economic theory; if that was meant for the care of the blind and other disabled persons. In the mediaeval period, among the Hindus, the blind often became minstrels or surdas and sang Bhajans whereas among the Muslims they could memorise the Quran and became Hafizes. This helped them to earn a pittance. Since the middle ages, history mentions of the handicapped individuals rising to positions of power and influence.

\textsuperscript{8}Martin, Puspa - All India Directory of Welfare agencies for the deaf, The Central Institute of Research and training in Public Co-operation, New Delhi, p. 2.
The third phase having a recent beginning and that is the attitude of helpfulness, aiming at minimising the physical and mental sufferings of the handicapped and making them useful members of the society.

**Modern Period**

Awakening social conscience and advances in modern medical and surgical knowledge, techniques and skills have gradually developed the realisation that the child with a handicap is first of all a human being, essentially no different from others, that his handicap may be corrected or improved and that he might be helped to participate in a range of activity open to all citizens. The advances of science and technology had led to the development of devices such as braille, artificial hearing aids and thereby the handicaps of the handicapped children are no longer so serious as to deprive them from acquiring knowledge subjects.

However, planned welfare of the blind in India could be assumed to have begun towards the end of the 19th century when attempts were first made to census the blind population in the country. The concept of educating the blind was brought to India by the British and other European missionaries after a lapse of over 100 years when ideas were developed in Europe.
The earliest reference to the blind welfare agencies in India is found in the year 1886, when Miss Sharp, a Christian Missionary, started a blind school at Amritsar (now shifted to Dehradun). Another school for the blind came into existence in 1890 at Palam Cottach in South India. The Calcutta Blind school was started in 1897 and was followed by American Mission School for the blind in 1900 in Bombay. The 20th century witnessed the steady growth in the number of schools and other establishments for the blind spread all over the country. However, the rate of growth was much less till 1947 by which there were 32 schools for the blind in the country. A planned approach to this problem was adopted for the first time in 1945 after the submission of the Report of the post-war development commonly known as 'Sargent Report'. After independence the subject 'Education' of the Physically Handicapped was entrusted to the Ministry of Education and it initiated many programmes to tackle this problem.

Again the credit of opening the first school for the deaf in India goes to the Christian Missionaries. They started the Bombay Institution for the deaf-mute as early as 1885. The Calcutta Deaf and dumb school was the second school founded in 1893. The third school was started in 1896 at
Palam Cottach in South India. Between 1900 and 1947, thirty-two more schools for the deaf were established.

After independence, due to the patronage of the national govt. and financial aid from the centre and the state govt. as many as 135 more institutions were started. The majority of the schools are for the deaf, some are associations to co-ordinate the activities of various agencies and a handful are craft and vocational training centres, workshops, clinics, recreation centres etc.

Out of 589 organisations affiliated to federations in different categories, 116 are for the mentally retarded, 140 for the orthopaedics, 148 for the deaf and 185 for the blind. There are also a number of private and voluntary organisations which are run independently all over the country by individuals and societies.

1.4 Democratic And Constitutional Rights Of The Handicapped

In this period of modern civilization, the people should not be influenced by prejudices, superstitions,

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ignorance and hatred towards the downtrodden and to the handicapped persons. The feelings of humanism should be developed in the minds of the people and people should feel the difficulties and distress of the handicapped persons. The handicapped persons have the same feelings, thoughts, needs, instincts and emotions like ourselves. On humanitarian grounds, the society should properly rehabilitate them so that they may live happily in the society. "The physically handicapped do not owe the world anything; on the other hand, the world owes them understanding and sympathy. For centuries now, our attitude towards the physically handicapped has been sullen and irrational, a mixture of superstition and misunderstanding. These attitudes made us as much handicapped as the visibly handicapped. Our lack of understanding and susceptibility to superstition was a kind of blindness, an inability to discern reality and to see that it was our own distortion of vision and attitude that was keeping us aloof from the physically handicapped". It should be clearly understood that care for the handicapped should no longer be treated as a mere act of charity but as a problem involving social obligations.

In a democratic set up everyone should have the opportunity to develop his talents according to his needs, abilities and interests. In the preamble of our constitution the fundamental rights are mentioned and it resolves to secure to all its citizens: justice—social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity and to promote among them all fraternity. The disabled are the citizens of the country and so they have every right to get proper education according to their needs and abilities. The handicapped are an important part of our society and if provided with the right opportunities and encouragement, can make important contributions to the social and economic life of the country. The fact that a disability prevents them from unfurling their potentialities make it incumbent on us to help them sincerely to minimise their suffering arising out of such disability. As for example, the discoveries of science and technology, the braille scripts, the tape-recorder and the reading machine have narrowed down the limitations which blindness imposes on people. Blind people have shown that they can become teachers, preachers, professors, scientists, solicitors, judges, administrators and other important jobs and professions. An example like Helen Keller, the blind, deaf and dumb lady who not only surmounted her
disabilities but also became a person of remarkable sensitivity and understanding, serves to teach us that disabled are not permanently disqualified from reaching great heights of human achievement. The vast potential of the disabled humanity today still remains untapped because of ignorance and lack of understanding on our part and persistence wrong social attitude. The people and the policy makers should be enlightened about the capacity of the disabled towards the total welfare and development of the community as well as their own by giving them full opportunity. This will greatly facilitate their all round development and their ultimate integration in the society. No nation that ignores its disabled can be considered truly whole. It is in the partnership of the disabled and able that the path of progress lies. Thus, it is necessary that an all our effort should be made for the training and rehabilitation of the handicapped. We have examples of advanced social legislation introduced in many western countries. We have similar legislation in India. These will provide not only the care and rehabilitation of the handicapped but also for its prevention. This will be in keeping with the preamble of our constitution which lays down that the state should secure fraternity among its citizens, assuming the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation.
This will be also in keeping with the directive principles laid down in our constitution.

There are certain other provisions in the constitution for the welfare and rehabilitation of the handicapped. In part IV of the constitution, "Right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases" is mentioned.

Article 41

The state shall within the limits of its economic capacity and development make effective provisions for security, the right to work, to education and to public assistance, in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disabled men and other cases of undeserved want.

Article 46

Enjoin upon the state to promote with special care, the education and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people. So in our constitution, there are mentions of the state's responsibility for the education and rehabilitation of the handicapped persons. They have constitutional

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12 Provision relating to social welfare in the constitution of India, Govt. of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, New Delhi.
rights to have all facilities for educating themselves and leading a life of honour and dignity as a first class citizen.

1.5 India And The International Year Of The Disabled Persons

The general Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of the Disabled Persons in their resolution No. 31/123 dated 16th November, 1976 with the following objectives.

(1) Helping the disabled persons in their physical and psychological adjustment to the society.

(2) Promoting all national and international efforts to provide disabled persons with proper assistance, training, care and guidance, to make available opportunities for suitable work and to ensure their full integration in society.

(3) Encouraging study and research projects designed to facilitate the practical participation of the disabled persons in daily life, for example by improving their access to public buildings and transportation systems.

(4) Educating and informing the public the rights of the disabled persons to participate in and contribute to various aspects of economic, social and political life.
(5) Promoting effective measures for the prevention of disability and for the rehabilitation of the disabled persons. The theme is "Full participation and Equality". The U.N. and its allied agencies have over the years become increasingly concerned with the welfare of the handicapped people and 1981 was the focal point when the year was declared as International Year of the Disabled Persons. The interest generated and the concern expressed was so considerable that the U.N. has declared 1983-1992 as the decade of the disabled. Apart from this, however, the U.N. and the various international agencies have formulated a large body of declarations, recommendations, resolutions excellently drafted giving detailed and practical guidelines at different levels for furthering the cause of the disabled. Mrs. Darina de Gouvea Nouill, President of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, points out "If all these considered recommendations of U.N. and specialised agencies were implemented energetically and efficiently, tremendous all round development could be achieved, but without its implementation by the member states, these excellent instruments would be meaningless to the learning millions of our disabled brethren. However, interest and sincerity of the world community towards promoting the equalisation of opportunity for the disabled and participation of the disabled themselves in developing programmes for their
welfare is amply proved.\textsuperscript{13}

India is one of the signatories to the United Nations resolutions proclaiming 1981 as International Year of the Disabled Persons. It is a bewildering fact that we are having in our midst 60 million disabled persons. Within the framework of the International Year of the Disabled Persons, 1981 and the general objectives for the year as declared by the United Nations, India set forth to meet the following objectives.

(a) To evolve a 'National Policy' on handicapped persons which includes education, training and employment to achieve full social integration.

(b) To start a network of services reaching to the grass root level to provide them with comprehensive rehabilitation services.

(c) To switch over from institutionalisation to integration of the handicapped into the community.

(d) To give a rural bias to the services of the handicapped since the majority of the handicapped live in villages.

(a) To develop a National Disability Prevention Programme.

(f) To develop a network of information and publicity for dissemination of information on new techniques for employees, teachers and social workers.

(g) A campaign to eradicate prejudices to form part of this programme.

(h) To collect all relevant data on the handicapped.

Special efforts were made in India to collect maximum information data on disability in our last census.

Keeping in view the objectives and plans, different measures have been adopted by the different states of India for the education and rehabilitation of the physically handicapped students. But all the measures have not been properly executed so as to provide all types of facilities for education and vocational rehabilitation of the handicapped students. Though different educational and vocational institutions have been established in our country, yet those have not been equipped with all types of modern equipments, teaching aids and proper curriculum according to the needs and abilities of the handicapped students. Unfortunately in our country a large number of the handicapped are found without proper care
and education. They are neglected by the society and the age old attitudes of the people have not changed. Those neglected handicapped children have become a burden on the society and they generally take the path of begging for their livelihood.

Regarding the impact of disability on our economy one example may be given. About the impact of blindness on the national economy while a precise estimate is not possible, according to one rough calculation, blindness costs the nation nearly Rs.5,000 crores in terms of capital wastage besides loss of production of equivalent value. If this huge economic loss is added, the burden due to social dependence of the blind on the community, the impact assumes staggering dimensions. In the words of Dr. H. Mahler, Director General of W.H.O. "It is tragic that at a time of prestigious technical advance so many persons still needlessly lose their sight due to lack of simple preventive and curative care".

It is thus observed that keeping the humane considerations apart, even from a regard from the stupendous social and

14 Mohammed, Rajh and Cobos, Hernando Pradilla. 'Planning Basic Rehabilitation Programme for visually Handicapped in developing countries', p. 71.

economic burden arising from blindness, the society must put his best foot forward in combating blindness.

Regarding the welfare agencies for the handicapped there are 589 organisations affiliated to federations in different categories. Of these 116 are for the mentally retarded, 140 for the orthopaedically handicapped, 148 for the deaf and 187 for the blind. There are also a number of private and voluntary organisations which are run independently all over the country by individuals and societies. As far as the welfare organisations for the visually handicapped are concerned, there are nearly 16 associations and 187 agencies in India. A majority have residential schools up to primary level only. Some of the schools have arrangements for middle and secondary education. The curriculum is the same as for the sighted but a little more importance is given to training in music and craft work. The standard of these schools leaves much to be desired as they provide little opportunities for their rehabilitation. Moreover, out of 40 lakhs of blind children in India, only one out of eight receives education in blind schools. There are also problems regarding

16 All India Directory of Welfare Agencies For the Blind: The Central Institute of Research and Training in Public Co-operation, April, 1972, New Delhi, p. 37.

17 Ibid., p. 39.
curriculum, teaching aids, special equipments and specially trained teachers for the blind in India and thereby the blind students are being deprived of proper education.

The majority of schools for the deaf also teach up to primary level while some teach up to middle school level, only a few schools open mostly for children with some residual hearing capacity, teach up to high school level. Besides most of the schools teach traditional craft activities such as sewing, carpentry, cane work etc. as a part of school education. 18

Regarding the orthopaedically handicapped students, there are only few institutions specially meant for them. Most of the orthopaedically handicapped children are deprived of education for want of special schools and other equipments. Some of them generally read in the schools meant for the normal children.

1.6 Facilities of Education for The Physically Handicapped Students in Assam Since Independence

There are a large number of physically handicapped

persons in Assam. In Assam, the number of disabled persons is estimated to be around 15 lakhs. Of course, there is no authentic data regarding the number of physically handicapped persons. In Assam the census operation could not be conducted along with other parts of the country in 1981. So, the number of physically handicapped persons upto 1981 is not available.

Table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Blind</td>
<td>8,526</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Deaf and dumb</td>
<td>16,282</td>
<td>50.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Crippled</td>
<td>7,319</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again from the Table 1.3, it is found that the number of disabled persons in Assam ranges from 529 to 829 in the rural

Table 1.3*

Estimated Number of Disabled Persons

(Per 1,00,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States/UTs</th>
<th>28th Round (Oct-June '84)</th>
<th>36th Round (July-Dec '81)</th>
<th>Ranking According to 36th Round.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural Urban</td>
<td>Rural Urban</td>
<td>Rural Urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>947 631</td>
<td>2426 1776</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ASSAM</td>
<td>529 390</td>
<td>829 809</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bihar</td>
<td>669 429</td>
<td>1872 1329</td>
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<td>4. Gujarat</td>
<td>581 659</td>
<td>1507 1115</td>
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<td>5. Haryana</td>
<td>854 1072</td>
<td>1928 2233</td>
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<td>6. Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td></td>
<td>1680 1071</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>7. Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>490 266</td>
<td>1764 934</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>8. Karnataka</td>
<td>734 529</td>
<td>1896 1329</td>
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<td>9. Kerala</td>
<td>1184 1459</td>
<td>1647 1650</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>10. Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>990 781</td>
<td>1393 1107</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>11. Maharashtra</td>
<td>1068 875</td>
<td>1663 1177</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. MANIPUR</td>
<td></td>
<td>712 480</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>13. MEGHALAYA</td>
<td>1128 550</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>14. NAGALAND</td>
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<td>15. Orissa</td>
<td>942</td>
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<td>2162</td>
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<td>16. Punjab</td>
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<td>17. Rajasthan</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>2051</td>
<td>1632</td>
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<td>18. Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>1014</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>2130</td>
<td>2108</td>
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<td>19. Tripura</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>20. Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<td>452</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1478</td>
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<td>21. West Bengal</td>
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<td>786</td>
<td>1621</td>
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<td>22. Chandigarh</td>
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<td>23. Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli</td>
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<td>24. Delhi</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Goa, Daman &amp; Diu</td>
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<td>1038</td>
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<td>26. Mizoram</td>
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<td>28. All India</td>
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<td>725</td>
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<td>1420</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

areas and 390 to 809 in the urban areas per one lakh of population as compared with the All India average of 890 to 1844 for rural and 725 to 1420 for urban population. In Tripura, orthopaedically
disability is higher followed by Mizoram, Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam, so far as rural areas are concerned. In urban areas, however, Assam comes immediately after Mizoram. So far as mental disability is concerned, a sub-committee was constituted with Dr. Prabhu of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences as Chairman. The information collected by the committee will go a long way in making plans for the regions. However, only information about Assam is available. The proportion is 29.7% for the rural and 54% for the urban areas as compared with the all India average of 11.1% for the rural and 17.5% for the urban areas.19

There was no provision for the education of the physically handicapped children before independence in Assam. Regarding general education also Assam has been one of the most backward states of India.

Due to different socio-economic and cultural factors, the expansion of primary and secondary education has not been encouraging and the education for the physically handicapped has been sadly neglected.

19Shuyan, J.C. Article "Surveying the handicapped" 'Assam Tribune', March 10, 1984.
Table 1.4

Percentage of Literacy (1961-’81) of India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>29.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>36.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.5

Percentage of Literacy of Assam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>31.6 (Projected)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are five educational institutions for the blind and one for the deaf and dumb. There is no special educational

*Source - Govt. of Assam, Department of Economics and Statistics Census of India, 1981.
institution for the orthopaedically handicapped students in Assam. All the educational institutions are managed by voluntary organisations except the blind school of Jorhat and the deaf and dumb school at Guwahati, which are managed by the social welfare department of the State Government.

The blind schools are situated one in each district of Nagaon, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur and Kamrup. The blind school at Nagaon was established in 1953 and managed by Sree Manta Sankar Mission, a voluntary organisation. There are provisions for imparting education from pre-primary to high school level. There are also provisions for imparting music education and training for handicrafts.

Another blind school, named Janamangal Adarsha Vidyalaya is situated at Moran in the district of Dibrugarh. It imparts education from primary to secondary level. There is also provision for music education.

Jorhat Blind School was established on 25th March, 1974 and was managed by a voluntary organisation but later on it was taken over by the Government of Assam. The school imparts general education from primary to high school level and also gives training in music and crafts.

Another institution for the blind named Assam Academy for the blind, was started on 2nd October, 1969 at Bihpuria
in the district of North Lakhimpur. It is also managed by a voluntary organisation and it imparts general education from pre-primary to high school level. There is also provision for training in music and crafts.

The other institution for the blind was started on 4th January, 1976 at Beltola near Guwahati. It is also managed by a voluntary organisation. It imparts general education from primary to high school level and there is also provision for music education.

The only educational institution for the deaf and dumb, was established in 1979 and its name is Govt. Shovari Devi Sarwgi Deaf and Dumb School, Kahilipara, Guwahati. It was later taken over by the Govt. of Assam. It imparts general education up to High School Leaving Certificate standard and gives training in crafts.

As majority of the schools are organised by voluntary organisations and due to paucity of funds, there are many problems in the institutions as a result of which the physically handicapped students are deprived of proper education.

There are modern scientific equipments and other educational technology for the education of the physically handicapped students. In advanced countries and also in some other states of India, the institutions for the physically
handicapped have got those modern scientific equipments and other facilities for the education of the physically handicapped students.

The institutions of the physically handicapped students of Assam lack most of the modern facilities specially meant for the physically handicapped students. Most sad and painful is the fact that the existing institutions of the blind and the deaf and dumb in our state are not run on modern scientific lines as a result the qualitative aspect of these institutions continues to remain miserable. More than 300 blind and deaf and dumb students are currently receiving education in these institutions which are invariably plagued by problems like dearth of braille text books and regular braille and talking-book library, paucity of aids and appliances, absence of adequate recreational facilities, trained teachers and absence of special educational provisions to suit the needs of physically handicapped students. In the case of vocational rehabilitation, there is no proper curriculum in the schools. There are only a few vocational institutions specially meant for the physically handicapped. Vocational training is very essential for making the physically handicapped self-sufficient in life. But most of the institutions give training in traditional crafts and the products are not recognised by competent authority. The employment opportunities whether in govt. enterprises or private
sectors are not encouraging as the employers have doubts regarding the efficiency of the physically handicapped persons.

1.7 Purposes of Study And Its Significance

Along with the declaration of the International Year of the Disabled Persons and the U.N. declaration of 1983-1992 as the decade of the disabled, it is felt that there should be a proper educational development of the physically handicapped students in Assam. So, keeping in view the importance of education for the physically handicapped students, a proper study should be made on the "Development of education among the physically handicapped students of Assam since independence" and on the basis of the findings of the study a suitable scheme of education is to be formulated for the physically handicapped students so that they would be educationally, vocationally and socially rehabilitated in the society.

To study the main problem and to give suggestions for the proper development of education for the physically handicapped students, the researcher thinks that the following sub-problems which are given in question forms must be studied and properly solved.
(1) What are the existing educational, vocational and rehabilitational facilities for the physically handicapped in Assam?

(2) What are the problems relating to curriculum, trained teachers, teaching aids and equipments, service-conditions of teachers and the other educational facilities of the educational institutions of the physically handicapped?

(3) What are the different types of physical, emotional and social problems of the physically handicapped students?

(4) What are the causative factors of becoming physically handicapped in Assam?

(5) What type of education should be given to the physically handicapped students according to their needs and abilities so that they would become useful citizens?

(6) What type of vocational courses are to be organised so that they could be properly rehabilitated?

On the basis of the above key questions, the objectives of the study have been formulated, which are described in the
The researcher feels that the findings of the study will help to know the existing educational and vocational facilities for the physically handicapped students of Assam. It will help us to know the different educational problems viz. problem of administration, problem of curricular and co-curricular activities, problem of teaching aids and other equipments, problem of students and teachers etc. Again, the study will be helpful for knowing the different causes for which the children become handicapped and thereby it would be helpful to take proper preventive measures. The study will further help to know the different physical, emotional and social problems of the physically handicapped students and to suggest useful measures for all round development of the physically handicapped children.

It is hoped that the researcher would be able to offer various suggestions considering the research findings for the solution of the different problems and would be able to recommend some educational measures for the Education -Planners for the preparation and implementation of a suitable scheme of education for the physically handicapped children of Assam.
Thus, the study would help to a great extent to know the educational and sociological approach to the problems and the findings and suggestions would go a long way to provide proper educational and vocational rehabilitation of the physically handicapped and thereby it would help in the all round social development of Assam.

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