CHAPTER-I
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INTRODUCTION

“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.” ¹ (Kurhade, M.S. 2011).

...... John F. Kennedy

“Education is a liberating force, and it is also a democratizing force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.”² (Kurhade, M.S.). This axiomatic impression of Indira Gandhi is what all schools of humanities and social sciences advocate. Education is indeed a liberating force, and right to liberty is a fundamental one. Education can enrich human life more than anything else can do. Once acquired, education remains as an indelible asset. Education is the birth right of every individual. The goal of education is to prepare children for a happy, productive and useful civic life. Therefore importance is given on education all through the ages all over the world. In India, education was a state subject but with 42nd amendment in the constitution which received president’s assent on December 18, 1976, it was put on the concurrent list.³ (Aggarwal, J.C.) Among the all stages of education, primary education is the basic and fundamental stage of education. Constitution of India also places special importance on universal elementary education. It is the minimum education that may be provided to individual for removing darkness of ignorance and illiteracy of the people, make man capable of reading and writing, enables man to make favourable adjustment and progressive development with society, identify and unfold native potential of the individual and make human resources and natural resources of a country effectively utilized. It is this education that can make one a responsible citizen for effective functioning of a democracy. It is therefore the obligatory duty and responsibility of a welfare state to make education available and easily attainable by each and every child.
Framers of the Indian Constitution realized the importance of education and have, thus, imposed a duty on the state under article 45 as one of the Directive Principles of State Policy to provide free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years within 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution. They were of the opinion that in view of the financial condition of the state it was not feasible to make it a Fundamental Right under Part-III of the Constitution and, therefore, included it in the Chapter IV of the Constitution. While relying on effective and honest implementation of this directive, they expected to abolish illiteracy from the country within stipulated period. (GOI Amendment).

One of the essential prerequisites for enabling child to seek himself at his best is education. Education is intrinsic to the fullest realization of child’s potentials. It sharpens child’s inner faculties, broadens his intellectual horizon and makes him self-reliant and independent. The imperatives of social justice and equity mandate education for disadvantaged and marginalized sections of society such as the disabled or the special need children. It can be used as a constructive tool for their empowerment. Education in fact, “is an activity of acquisition, interlinking and transmission of knowledge and understanding which is indispensable for all, especially for the Children With Special Need population of the world.” (Wani, M.A.). The CWSN can be transformed from “passive community gears” to productive human resources, capable of making an useful contribution in social development, with the help of education.

1.1. Children With Special Needs

‘Special Need’ is a term used in clinical diagnostic and functional development to describe individuals who require assistance for disabilities that may be medical, mental, or psychological. Children with autism, down syndrome, dyslexia, blindness, or cystic fibrosis, for example, may be considered to have special needs. In the UK, special needs often refer to special needs within an educational context (Arunachalam, N. 2010). This is also referred to as Special
Educational Needs (SEN). In Germany, special needs kids are called “besondere Kinder” (“special children”) (Arunachalam, N). The term Children With Special Educational Needs addresses all those students who permanently or temporarily may have need of special educational responses on the part of the teacher, the institutions and / or the system, because of their physical, mental or multiple impairments, emotional condition or for reasons of situational disadvantage (Lynch, J. 1994).

In India a learner with special educational needs is defined variously in different documents. A child with special educational needs in District Primary Education Programme Document is defined as a child with disability, namely, visual, hearing, locomotor and intellectual (DPEP, 2001). However, the country report in the NCERT-UNESCO Regional Workshop Report titled “Assessment of Needs For Inclusive Education, Report of the First Regional Workshop for SAARC Countries (2000)” states that Special Educational Needs goes beyond physical disability. It also refers to the large proportion of children in the school age belonging to the groups of street children, deprived children and also the victims of natural catastrophes and social conflicts. (NCERT, 2000). The SSA Framework For Implementation covers Children With Special Needs under the section on Special Focus Groups. Children With Special Needs may have mild learning disabilities or profound mental retardation; food allergies or terminal illness; developmental delays that catch up quickly or remain entrenched: occasional panic attacks or serious psychiatric problems. The designation is useful for getting needed services, setting appropriate goals, and gaining understanding for a child and stressed family. (Arunachalam, N.).

Special needs are commonly defined by what a child can’t do - by milestones unmet, foods banned, activities avoided, experiences denied. These hit families hard, and may make “Special Needs" seem like a tragic designation. Some parents mourn their child’s lost potential, and many conditions become more troubling with time. Other families may find that their child’s challenges make
triumphs sweeter, and that weaknesses are often accompanied by amazing strengths.¹² (Arunachalam, N.).

Disabled children or Children With Special Needs would refer to sensory, physical and intellectual impairments, communication, emotional and behavioural disorders, mental health difficulties and multiple disabilities. According to the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995 “Person with disability is defined as a person suffering from not less than 40% of any disability as certified by a medical authority.”¹³ (P.W.D. Act, 1995). Broadly the following seven types of disabilities have been defined and included in the Act.

- Blindness
- Low vision
- Leprosy cured
- Hearing impairment
- Locomotor disability
- Mental retardation
- Mental illness

In addition to the above, National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act’ 1999¹⁴ (Mukhopadhyay, S, 2005) has defined and enlisted the following disabilities:

- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Mental Retardation
- Multiple Disabilities

Children With Special Needs or children with disabilities is a critical group of children who may not be availing the educational opportunities and part of group who is out of school. According to the India Human Development Report

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(1999), the incidence of various types of disabilities among the population 0-4 years was 2042 per 100,000 and 2896 per 100,000 children in the age group of 5-12 years.\textsuperscript{15} (Janshala, 2003).

Government report (Janshala, Jan-March, 2001) shows that the 200 million children in 6-14 years of age group, approximately 12 million are children with special needs (about 6%), of which only 1 million are attending school.\textsuperscript{16} (Janshala, 2003). With such a large number of children out of school, the goal towards EFA remains a distant dream covering children with disabilities under regular system of education.

1.2. Inclusive Education

The traditional response to the question of education for the disabled has been the establishment of special schools in which the disabled are taught in segregation from other students. Of late however, disability activists have called for a radical alteration of the "exclusivist mind set" which presumes that children with disabilities slow down the rest of the class, therefore requiring differential treatment. Realizing that special schools promote isolation, alienation and social exclusion, they call for "inclusive education" which can facilitate the building up of harmonious and compassionate societies.\textsuperscript{17} (Chatterjee, G, 2003). Special education is apart from the general education system, but inclusive education is a part of general education. Inclusive education goes one step further. In this approach, special education is an integral part of general education system. Therefore, inclusion is an ideology and not a programme. Inclusive education approach indicates that the general classroom teachers should be fully equipped to take care of the educational needs of disabled children. Inclusive education, which can serve as the bedrock of a truly inclusive society accepting, respecting and celebrating diversity, can be defined as, "Inclusive Education, as an approach, seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. It implies all learners, young people - with or without disabilities being able to learn together
through access to common preschool provisions, schools and community educational setting with an appropriate network of support services. This is possible only in a flexible education system that assimilates the needs of a diverse range of learners and adapts itself to meet these needs. It aims at all stakeholders in the system (learners, parents, community, teachers and administrators, policy makers) to be comfortable with diversity- and see it as a challenge rather than a problem." (HRD Report, Govt. of India).

The recent drive towards inclusion which is about the disabled children’s right to participate the same education system with non-disabled ones. The main purpose of inclusion is to ensure individualization of learning by the help of education plans and programmes and to integrate the disabled and non-disabled students in terms of educational and social life in the same class by expanding the borders of this individuation.

Inclusion is the reality of our country as a result of demographic, economic, psychological and other reasons and its become an applicable field. For that reason, it is intended that the disabled students would overcome the difficulties by helping them in order to gain self confidence, to adopt their conditions, not to be isolated from their peers, to be a natural member of the regular class and to participate in all the activities that the non-disabled students are engaged in as much as possible. In this way, it is aimed to promote self acceptance whatever these children’s disability or special needs are, on the basis of respecting self and personality development and both these disabled children and non-disabled ones become more conscious against the reality of their conditions because children develop their behaviours by social modeling or imitating certain attitudes and situations. Positive modeling is important for the students in the classroom. In general, it is assumed that presenting a natural environment, peers, and school environment will encourage a sense of belonging into the class. However, that cannot be called as an effort to transform them into non-disabled students, because its purpose is to provide provisions for these students to express their individual
abilities and interests in the best way and to afford an access to the instruction offered in the general education curriculum.

Recognizing the importance of integrating disabled students with the mainstream, the Indian legal system, ever since the enactment of the Constitution in 1950 has persistently attempted to move towards adopting the idea of inclusive education. Article 41 of the Constitution castes responsibility upon the state to "make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want." Sarbha Siksha Abhijan Mission also focuses on the education of the special group of children and stated that focus will be on the educational participation of children from SC/ST, religious and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged and the disabled children which are the children with special needs and on the implementation of the concept of inclusive education.¹⁹ (SSA Annual Progress Report, 2006).

Inclusion workably implies attending the school that the pupil would have attended in the absence of a significant special need. It implies a radical reform of school in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of pupils.²⁰ (Mittler, P. 2000). According to the Salamanca Statement, "the fundamental principle of the inclusive schools is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences, they may have. Inclusive schools recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnership with their communities."²¹ (UNESO, 1994). Thus, it can be noted that inclusion came to be viewed not as a reform of special education but restructuring of general education system. Students with special needs are benefited from additional educational services, different approaches of teaching, access to a resource room and use of technology.
Inclusion has been defined as the acceptance of all pupils within the mainstream education system, taught within the common framework, and identified as the responsibility of all teacher.\textsuperscript{22} (Thomas, G, 1997)

The dictionary meaning of ‘inclusion’ is to take in, or consider as part, or member of or to embrace. Inclusion is about membership and belonging to a community. In context to education, it is restructuring schools as communities where all children can learn. The general philosophy of inclusive education provides for good teaching practices, healthy relationship between teacher and students, to improve the quality of education for all children in a classroom and help the development of all children in different ways. The concept of inclusion has emerged from the ideas of providing equal opportunities to “all” children which means providing equal opportunities keeping in mind the diverse nature of children’s individual needs.

The international move towards inclusion of special needs children into mainstreaming classrooms rather than educating them in an isolated environment has been a main concern raising issues and interest for educators, policy-makers and researchers in recent times.\textsuperscript{23} (Chalmers, R. 1998).

According to Wikipedia, 2009, inclusive education is the education of students with special needs in a way that addresses the student’s individual differences and needs.\textsuperscript{24} (Wikipedia). Ideally, this process involves the individual planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipments and materials, accessible settings, and other interventions designed to help learners with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and community than would be available if the students were only given access to a typical classroom education.

Inclusive Education is a program and practices designed for students, as handicapped or gifted students, whose mental ability, physical ability, emotional functioning etc. requires special teaching approaches, equipment or care within or outside a regular classroom. 

(8)
Inclusive education differs from previously held notions of ‘integration’ and ‘mainstreaming’, which tended to be concerned principally with disability and special educational needs and implied learners changing or becoming ‘ready for’, accommodation by the mainstream. By contrast, inclusion is about the child’s right to participate and the school’s duty to accept the child. Inclusion rejects the use of special school or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities. A premium is placed upon full participation by students with disabilities and upon respect for their social, civil and educational rights.

Inclusive education for disabled children is a mean to educate Children With Special Need in a least restrictive environment along with their normal peers in a regular school setting, so that, they develop like other children. Inclusive Education for disabled children is a centrally sponsored scheme of MHRD which is implemented through the state government. In Assam the department of education has taken up the education for children with Special Needs through SSA.

Under Inclusive Education following category of disabled children are included: (Kalyanjyoti, SSA, 2008).

- Speech Impaired (SI)
- Learning Disability (LD)
- Multiple Disability (MD)
- Mentally Retarded (MR)
- Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- Visually Impaired (VI)
- Hearing Impaired (HI)
- Orthopedically Impaired (OI)
- Autism
O’Brien argued that children with special educational needs have the right to be educated in a full inclusive classroom, and should not be segregated from their peers for any reason in regular classroom and preparing appropriate education which meet their needs.²⁶ (O’Brien, T, 2001).

Although inclusion has been a mainstream terminology for more than two decades, the struggle for achieving education for all has been a long standing battle for more than five decades.²⁷ (Universal Declaration, UN). The ongoing journey towards securing basic education and including all starting with Article 26 followed by number of key declarations, such as: The World Programme Action Concerning Disabled Persons (UN, 1983); Convention on the Right of the Children (UN, 1989); Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994); Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000); Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2000); EFA Flagship: Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion (2001); and, Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) However, the longstanding battle towards a more equitable, fair and inclusive society and education systems seems to be at its crawling stage.

1.3. Development of education for the Children With Special Needs outside India:

Across the centuries disabled children or the retarded children were believed to be as the results of possession by demons and evils. Sometimes they were considered fools and exploited as court jesters. The severely retarded were kept to eliminate in early years. The treatment of retarded had been related to the perception of various societies. Some retarded were viewed as enjoying the favour of God while other had to face cruel and inhuman treatment.²⁸ (Bora, J.R. 2002).

However, from the thirteenth century, more charitable attitude developed towards handicapped persons. Under the influence of Christianity, the churches started to provide asylums for the retarded. Education for the retarded were began in the Middle East, in the Mediterranean era, in Europe and finally in the United
States. Conditions of the retarded were not improved in Europe (Taylor and Taylor, Encyclopedia of Education).

Throughout the world, Children With Special Needs (CWSN) were a neglected lot till the 18th century, when the ideas of fraternity, equality and liberty sweeping France and America inspired political reformers and leaders in medicine and education to turn their attention towards the educational needs of such individuals. An early proponent of education for the blind was Valentin Haily, who opened a school in Paris in 1784; his efforts were followed by those of Louis Braille. Attempts to educate deaf children predate Haily but not until Friedrich Moritz Hill (1805 - 74) developed an oral method of instruction did teaching of the deaf become established. The development of standardized sign languages further advanced instruction of the deaf. Scientific attempts to educate mentally retarded children began with the efforts of Jean Marc-Gaspard Itard (1775 - 1838). Itard’s work influenced later theorists as Edouard Seguin (1812-80) and Maria Montessori. Children with motor disabilities, once considered subjects for special education, are usually integrated into the standard classroom, often by means of wheel chairs and modified desks. France played a pioneering role in the area of education for disabled. It was in Paris that Valentine Huay started a school for the blind in 1785 and Father De L’epee developed an early version of finger spelling for the deaf (Arunachalam, 2010). In the first half of the 20th century, the federal government’s involvement in education was minimal. In 1951 the first institution for research on exceptional children opened at the University of Illinois and began what was to become the newest focus of the field of special education, the slow learner and eventually, what we know today as learning disability.

In the early 1970s, the federal courts, in response to litigation brought by parents of children with disabilities, began to rule that schools owed students equal protection under the law and could not discriminate against individual students on the basis of disability. A year later in Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia, the court ruled that school districts could not refuse to provide educational services to children with disabilities because of inadequate financial
resources. Rather, the court asserted, schools were required to provide an appropriate educational experience for students with disabilities regardless of the costs involved, a legal principle later included in federal special education legislation. As a result of these and other court rulings, pressure was mounting on the Congress to pass legislation clarifying schools' role in the provision of special education services and accommodations for students with special needs. In 1973, Congress responded by passing the Rehabilitation Act, which stated that, agencies accepting federal funds, including local schools, could not discriminate on the basis of disability. In essence, this meant that all children, including those with special needs, had a right to attend school. However, neither funding nor a process for monitoring compliance was included in the Act. In the 1980s the Regular Education Initiative (REI) was an attempt to return responsibility for the education of students with disabilities to neighbourhood schools and regular classroom teachers. In the 1990s the full inclusion movement called for educating all students with disabilities in the regular classroom with a single, unified and responsive education system. The federal government began to encourage the inclusion of children with disabilities in the public school setting. Although by 1973 some 45 states had passed laws providing for the education of children with disabilities, these were not inclusive, and many children continued to be shut out of American schools 31 (Pattnaik, SN, 2010).

On the international platform there have been a number of encouraging pronouncements in recent years regarding the education of disabled children. But it is also found that the messages supporting inclusive education have never been stronger as expectation. There are some international policy and practice supporting the education of disabled children 32 (Umadevi, M.R. 2010).

In 1975, the United States Congress passed Public Law 94-142, originally called the Education For All Handicapped Children Act. Shortly after its passage, Public Law 94-142 was called "block buster legislation" and hailed as the law that known as having the greatest impact on education in history 33 (Umadevi, M.R. 2010).
Public Law 94-142 is directed primarily at the states, which are responsible for providing education to their citizens. Each state education agency must comply with the law by:

1. Locating and identifying all children with disabilities.
2. Identifying and placing handicapped children by means of testing and evaluation procedures that do not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, or native language.
3. Developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for every handicapped child in the state.
4. Educating each handicapped child in the least restrictive environment.
5. Protecting the rights of handicapped children and their parents by ensuring due process, confidentiality of records, and parental involvement in educational planning and placement decisions.

The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 177 countries worldwide. There are several general Articles in the Convention which lead up to Article 23, which is specifically about disabled children (Umadevi, M.R. 2010).

The convention includes statements such as: “all rights shall apply to all children, without discrimination on any ground including disability. In all actions the child’s best interests shall be a primary consideration and they should develop to the maximum extent possible”.

Article 23 also states the right of the disabled child to special care, education, healthcare, training, rehabilitation, employment preparation and recreation opportunities.

In 1994, UNESCO, the UN's Education Agency, published the Salamanca Statement, a declaration on the education of disabled children, which called for inclusion to be the norm. Representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations agreed on it (Umadevi, M.R. 2010).

UNESCO’s statement is unequivocal in asking the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schooling. In this statement it was said that regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and education for all.

The Salamanca Framework for Action was adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education. The Salamanca Framework for Action reinforced the principles expressed in the Jomtien Declaration and Standard Rules and stated that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

Convention on Disability Rights’ 2006 addressed the concerns of persons with disabilities themselves. The Convention presents a unique opportunity to examine the dichotomy brought into existence by earlier conventions on civil, political and socio-economic rights and to move on to foster indivisibility of human rights (Arunachalam, N. 2010).

India has been a signatory to all these declarations.

1.4. Inclusive Education in India

In India, the past three decades have witnessed a spurt of legislative and policy initiatives aimed at addressing the educational needs of a very large
“forgotten” and “invisible” population of children with disability. To capture the achievement towards providing access, equity and quality education as far as children with disabilities are concerned, it is vital to place it against the backdrop of achievements in the educational field for all children.

In Ancient India the persons with disabilities were given education in the communities in which they lived. Education was given in the mainstream institutions alongside the non-handicapped peers in a ‘Gurukulum’ setting. Individualized instructions were given based on the individual child’s need and age. A few residential institutions were established by the members of the royalty at different locations as an act of dharma, a duty. During the colonial period and after, schools for disabled children were established mostly in urban areas and were expensive. Their coverage was only 2% of the children in need. In the post independence years India had around 100 special schools for the persons with disabilities. The special schools were run by the government as well as non-government organizations. These special schools were inadequate considering the mammoth population in need of special education.

Providing access to basic education is a duty the Indian state that has taken upon itself. Therefore the government has taken various measures to provide access to education to all categories of students. Thus the differently able children are provided inclusive education in India so that they can seriously engage in improving the quality of their life. With the advancement of technology, Special Education in India for physically disabled or mentally challenged is also fast improving.

A radical change in attitudes and global initiatives on equalization of opportunity and education for all in the recent years is vividly seen. This change was mainly because of a growth in the understanding of children with disability, resulting in a change in attitude towards children with disabilities and stressing the paramount importance of integrating them in appropriate environments, suited to their special needs. This was followed by various Acts of Parliament which were
later strengthened by fiscal support ensuring implementation. Today the new approach recommends access to a common schooling for all children, with access to a curriculum appropriate for all pupils.

In India education for the disabled was in existence since the pre-independence time, with very few schools or NGOs helping mentally impaired children. Along with other parts of the world, India too, witnessed the emergence of education for CWSN.

Historically, organized attempts to educate blind children were made in India when Christian Missionaries established schools. The first school for blind children was established by an English missionary known as Annie Sharp in Amritsar in 1887. Interestingly enough, throughout the nineteenth century, an unknown number of blind children were casually integrated with sighted children\(^38\) (Miles).

Due to insufficient documentation, researchers in the past 50 years, both Indian and foreign are poorly informed about India’s Special Educational Needs and Disability Issues in the nineteenth century. Until about 1947, the then provincial governments had taken sporadic interest in the education and training of the handicapped, usually by giving ad-hoc grants to schools and other institutions for the handicapped, and it emerges that it was voluntary effort that played a pioneering role in the field of education and social services.

In 1944 in England, the Education Act or the Butler Act was passed for universalizing education. At about the same time in India the first official attempt to analyze the problem of educating the ‘handicapped’ was made in the report of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in 1944\(^39\) (Sargent, J, 1968). The report recommended that wherever possible, handicapped children should not be segregated from normal children. The report made two other major recommendations. First, it asked for making education of the disabled ‘an essential part of a national system of education to be administered by the Education Department’, and secondly, it wanted ten per cent of the total expenditure on basic
and high schools to be set aside for education of the handicapped. The report was progressive of its time. Though it was under the influence of defects-in-children theory, it argued for integrated education and for making the education of children with disabilities a part of the ‘national system of education’ under the education ministry\(^4\) (Jha, M.M. 2004). In April 1947, the Ministry of Education created a unit to deal with the problems of the blind. The functions of this unit were later extended to cover almost every category of physically handicapped person. However, it was mainly through the efforts of voluntary organizations that a few institutions especially for children were opened in different parts of the country. By 1947, about 50 institutions were functioning for the blind.

In 1945 the League of Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the field of education, Article 26 of the Declaration proclaims the right of every citizen to an appropriate education regardless of gender, race, colour and religion\(^\)43 (United Nations Declaration, 1948). This right is also enshrined in the constitutions of all independent nations. The Constitution of India also ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and mandates an inclusive society including persons with disabilities. India is a signatory to the declaration on the full participation and equality of people with disabilities in the Asia Pacific Region and Biwako Millenium Framework for Action towards an inclusive, barrier free and rights based society. The call for inclusive education is the outcome of a complex set of discourses about the equality of education that is driven by changing demographics, ideologies, and perceptions of groups as well as by social issues. The legal beginnings of inclusion began when educational institutions responded to the Civil Right’s Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, a time of reform and the public joining forces to gain identity and respect.

In the five Year Plan also emphasise was given on education and development of Children with Special Needs\(^\)41 (www. Planning Commission).

The provision for handicapped children was made under Social Welfare in the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) and not under education. The Government
commented on the need for detection and prevention of the incidences of handicapping conditions; the initiative and work was, however, left to voluntary efforts.

The Secondary Education Commission, also known as Mudaliar Commission submitted its report in the year 1952-53. This Commission made the specific recommendations for the schools for the handicapped. This commission reported that there should be a few schools in each state for Children with Special Needs where methods specially suited to their needs\footnote{GOI Amendment, 2002}.

The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) provided for additional facilities, such as model schools for blind and deaf children, women's section in training schools for the adult blind, and provision for scholarship, etc. and training of handicapped persons, though the voluntary organizations continued to occupy an important place. In September 1955, the Ministry of Education constituted a National Advisory Council for the Education of the Handicapped. It also proposed survey of handicapped children and provisions of their education.

In the Third Plan (1961-66) provision for handicapped appeared under education. The National Centre for the Blind was strengthened and National Braille Library started. A training centre for the adult deaf and a school for the mentally deficient children were established. The Scheme of Scholarship under which assistance is given to higher education, technical and professional education to the handicapped children was further extended. Emphasis was laid on the development of services for the handicapped through voluntary agencies and on the provision of special employment exchanges for the physically handicapped.

In 1964 the Kothari Commission was the first education commission which brought up the issue of children with special needs in the Plan of Action and again gave strong recommendations for including children with special needs into ordinary schools\footnote{Report of Education Commission, 1964}. The Kothari Commission further recommended the Ministry of Education to allocate the necessary funds and recommended NCERT to establish a cell for the study of
handicapped children. The principal function of the cell was to keep in touch with the research that is being done in the country and abroad and to prepare materials for teachers. In June 1964, work concerning the education, training and rehabilitation of the handicapped was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Social Welfare (GOI, 1965). This Commission had recommended that children with disabilities should be a part of the mainstream system. The Commission recommended two programmes - the special and the integrated. In addition, it also expressed the need for services for additional categories like partially sighted, the speech handicapped, the brain injured and emotionally disturbed. It was in the light of the above mentioned recommendations that the schemes for the education of handicapped children were initiated and provision made in the Fifth Five Year Plan.

National Policy Resolution on Education, 1968 stressed the need for equalization of educational opportunity. It observed that "Educational facilities for the physically and mentally handicapped children should be expanded and attempts should be made to develop integrated programmes enabling the handicapped children to study in regular schools" (Report of National Policy Resolution on Education, 1968).

In the Fourth Plan (1969-74) the facilities for handicapped were referred to as the rehabilitation of handicapped persons under Social Welfare. This Plan further increased and consolidated the facilities for handicapped person but in terms of magnitude, the coverage was meagre.

The Fifth Plan (1974-79) initiated action for streamlining the working of the four National Institutions for the Blind, the Deaf, the Mentally Retarded and the Orthopaedically Handicapped (under Ministry of Social Welfare) for their activities to be suitably expanded and improved. The institutions for the blind and the deaf were proposed to be reorganized for diversifying their training and other programmes. The Model School in the Institute for Mentally Retarded was upgraded to provide additional services. Other important schemes for the welfare
of the handicapped like scholarships, sheltered workshops, assistance to voluntary organizations and special employment exchanges were to receive greater attention. Soon after the presentation of the Fifth Plan, the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India, came out with a scheme for the Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC). In 1974 the Government of India launched the scheme under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which was later shifted to Ministry of Human Resource Development. The scheme provided educational opportunities to students with disability in regular schools and facilitates their retention through resource support in the schools.

In 1975, the government introduced Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED)\(^{46}\) (NCERT Report, 1992). This scheme, previously with the Ministry of Welfare, was transferred to the Ministry of HRD, under the IEDC Scheme. Children in the age group 5 to 14 years with not so severe impairments as determined through medical assessment were to be eligible for admission in regular schools. Through PIED, integration of a large number of children has happened. The scheme includes among other things, pre-school training and counseling for parents, allowances for books and stationery, uniform, transport, reader and escort, hostel facilities and other assisting devices.

The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) emphasized the need to prevent accidents and incidents leading to handicaps. It stressed the provision for pre and post-natal care and immunization, legal framework for the prevention and treatment of accidents, and opportunities for integrated education, vocational training and economic rehabilitation for integration of disabled in the mainstream of socio-economic life. Sixth Plan stated that the scheme of integrated education was to be revised and expanded so that varying needs of different types of handicapped children might be met effectively.

With the objective of providing educational opportunities for disabled children in common schools so as to facilitate their retention in the school system,
the Department of Education has been implementing a centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) since 1982-83. The scope of the scheme includes preschool training for disabled children and counseling for parents.

But the Seventh Plan period (1985-90) did not witness any dynamic developments on this account, "Not much could be observed for the education of the children and persons with disabilities in the Section on Education, Culture and Sports in the 7th plan. It also implies that inspite of the Scheme on Integrated Education of the Disabled (1983) being shifted to the Education Department of MHRD, the plan did not adequately record developments in this evolving approach to services for the education of children and persons with disabilities" (Mukhopadhyay, S. 2006). This plan period also witnessed the National Policy on Education, 1986.

National Policy on Education 1986 recommended Inclusive Education as a goal ‘to integrate the handicapped with the general community at all levels as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence’.

In 1992 Programme of Action (POA) states that a child with disability who can be educated in the general school should not be in the special school. Even those children who are initially admitted to special schools for training in daily living skills plus curriculum skills should be integrated in general schools, once they acquire daily living skills, communication skills and basic academic skills. The POA, 1992 not only reiterated the principle of integration but also made it an integral component of all basic education projects: non-formal education, adult education, vocational education and teacher education schemes, funded by the central government.

In Eighth Plan (1992-97) too education of the persons with the disabilities was a part of Social Welfare. Most of the schemes started in Seventh Plan were continued and extended.
Rama Murthy Committee' 1990 while appreciating the NPE' 1986, also observed that it is inadequate in the following respects:

1. It has not stressed the mobilization of the total general education system for the education of the handicapped.

2. Special schools have been treated in isolation from other educational institutions from the point of view of providing the educational supervisory infrastructure, leaving it to the Ministries of Welfare and HRD to co-operatively develop the same.

The Delhi Declaration on Education for All (1993) ensure a place for every child in a school or appropriate education programme according to his or her capabilities\(^\text{48}\) (Report on Delhi Declaration, 1994).

Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act’ 1992' was passed in the Parliament to regulate the manpower development programmes in the field of education of children with special needs. The major responsibilities of the RCI are to regulate the training policies and programmes in the field of rehabilitation of people with disabilities; to bring about standardizations of training courses for professionals dealing with people with disabilities; to prescribe minimum standards of education and training of various categories of professionals dealing with people with disabilities; to recognize institutions/ universities running degree/ diploma / certificate courses in the field of rehabilitation of the disabled\(^\text{49}\) (RCI Report, 1996).

A new legislation was enacted in 1994 known as the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act’1995 which states that disabled children should, as far as possible, be educated in integrated settings. The Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 provides for access to free education in an appropriate environment for children with disabilities till they attain the age of 18 years\(^\text{50}\) (India Gazette, 1996).
A programme called the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched in 1995 by the government, supported by the World Bank, with the aim of working out curricula, teacher training etc. for early childhood care, including disabled children. The most significant change was that the district primary schools in the state became responsible for all children, including disabled children. One of the major aim of DPEP was to promote integrated or inclusive education of children with mild to moderate disabilities51 (DPEP Calling, 1997).

Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) reported the progress on integrated education for the disabled. After the enactment of the Disabled Act‘1995 the education of the disabled upto age of 18 has become a legal obligation.

Janshala started in early 1998, is a collaborative effort of the Government of India and five UN agencies which worked for CWSN52 (Janshala Report, 2003).

National Trust Act of 1999 is meant for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mentally Retarded and Multiple Disabilities. The objectives of the Trust Act are to enable and empower persons with disabilities.

93rd amendment to the Indian Constitution passed in December 2001, affirms the government’s commitment to Education for All through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The SSA gives importance to early childhood care and education and appropriate intervention for children with special needs.

The thrust of SSA is on providing inclusive education to all children with special needs in regular schools53 (HRD Report, 2000). It also supports a wide range of approaches, options and strategies for education of children with special needs. This includes education through open learning system and open schools, non formal and alternative schooling, distance education and learning, special schools, home based education and itinerant teacher model, remedial teaching, part time classes and community based rehabilitations (CBR) and vocational education and cooperative programmes.

The World Education Forum (2000), agreed on six EFA Goals, one of its goal being that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. The aim is to provide education to every child thus lending the meaning to inclusive education, extending its sphere to encompass all children including minority children, children in special and disadvantaged sections and not just to children with disabilities.

The Draft National Policy on Special Education (2000) also regards both integration and inclusion as interested goals to be pursued.

The Kochi Declaration (North South Dialogue on Inclusive Education, 2003) stated that, Inclusion is quality education for all, based on the principle of equal opportunities and access.

A comprehensive Action Plan for the Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities was formulated in 2005 with the fundamental objective of ensuring “the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in all available mainstream educational settings, by providing them with a learning environment that is available, accessible, affordable and appropriate to help develop their learning and abilities”\(^5^5\) (Action Plan Report of Inclusive Education, 2005). It focuses on enrolment and retention of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system, providing need based educational system and other support in mainstream schools to children in order for them to develop their learning and abilities through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnership with their communities,
supporting higher and vocational education through proper implementation of the existing reservation quota in all educational institutions and the creation of barrier free learning environments and disability focused research and interventions in universities and educational institutions\textsuperscript{56} (Action Plan Report on Inclusive Education, 2005). Human Resource Development Minister Arjun Singh, in a speech in Parliament in March, 2005, while dwelling upon the need to have inclusive education so as to enable disabled students to become an integral part of the mainstream educational system, announced that all schools in the country will be made disabled friendly by 2020 and that all educational institutions including hostels, libraries, laboratories and buildings will have barrier free access for the disabled. He also promised the introduction of aids and appliances for the benefit of disabled students progressively throughout the country.

The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was released by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment in February 2006. The major highlight of the Policy document was the education of persons with disabilities.

On 15\textsuperscript{th} January 2009, Government has also launched centrally sponsored scheme of Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage (IEDSS). It also has specific provisions for teachers to support inclusion.

In India the Right to Education Bill is a constitutional amendment passed by the India parliament on 4 August 2009 which promises free and compulsory education for children between 6 to 14 years in India. The rough draft of the bill was composed in year 2005. The Bill received much opposition due to its mandatory provision to provide 25% reservation for disadvantaged children in private schools. The sub-committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education which prepared the draft Bill held this provision as a significant prerequisite for creating a democratic and egalitarian society. India Law commission had initially proposed 50% reservation for disadvantaged students in private schools. The text of the final bill passed the approval of the cabinet on 1 November 2008 and the bill
provides 25% reservation for disadvantaged and disabled children in private schools.

Contribution of NGOs towards Children With Special Needs can also be taken into consideration in India. In India there are more than 3500 NGOs serving people with disabilities. Services provided to children with disabilities by NGOs include clinical, rehabilitation, educational and referral services. Some of the NGOs provide all types of services under one roof. NGOs are doing a lot for the welfare of the CWSN with the partnership of leading institutes like RCI, NCTE and NUEPA etc.

Inspite of the keen interest exhibited by the Indian state towards inclusive education, the ground reality over the years has not changed drastically. A substantial proportion of the disabled population has still not been brought within the purview of the emancipating schemes of the central and state governments. Compared to the national literacy rate of about 65 percent, the literacy rate for the disabled is a bleak 49 percent. The literacy rate for male disabled is only about 58 percent, falling far short of the impressive national rate of nearly 76 percent. The literacy rate for female disabled is an abysmal 37 percent as opposed to the national rate of 54 percent. According to National Sample Survey Organization statistics of 2002, only 9 percent of the literate disabled go on to complete secondary education (Action Plan Report on Inclusive Education, 2005)

1.5. Development of education for the Children With Special Needs in Assam

Education plays a major role in the life of an individual in Assam. Many attempts have been made to meet the diverse educational needs of the people in the state and presently there are some areas like special education and the inclusive education for Children With Special Needs which is receiving more attention. In every classroom there are children with problems and our classrooms are more
diverse than ever. In Assam various governmental as well as non-governmental efforts are being made from time to time for education of the special needs children or the disabled children.

The Guwahati Mental Welfare Society, formed in 1977, has been providing a significant service to the mentally retarded children. The society established the North East Regional Training Institute for Mentally Handicapped (NERTIMH). The society, affiliated to the Federation for Mentally Retarded, India and recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India was formed to work for the welfare of mentally retarded. In 1980, this society established Mon Vikash Kendra, the first special school for mentally retarded. Mon Vikash Kendra is the only institution in Assam with residential facility. It also provides a ten month diploma course in Mental Retardation.

In 1986 “Ashadeep” a special school was established for mentally ill and mentally retarded.

In 1987, two other special schools, both registered as non-voluntary organization were established in Guwahati. They are “Shishu Sarothi” and “Sahayika”.

“Blessing” a special school for mentally retarded and spastic children was established in Dibrugarh in the year 1990 by Lion’s Club of Brahmaputra Valley.

Another special school, “Prerona Pratibandhi Shishu Vikash Kendra” was established at Jorhat in 1992.

In 1993 “Aswash” a rehabilitation centre for physically handicapped and mentally retarded was started in Dibrugarh. In the same year Assam Mental Welfare Society, Nalbari started a school for the special children at Nalbari.

In the year 1997, “Asha Rehabilitation Centre”, a special institution under central government was established in Narengi, Guwahati.
In 1998, Lion’s Club of Nagaon took initiative in establishment of a school “Asha Kiron” for spastics and mentally retarded children.

Srimanta Sankar Mission Blind School, Nagaon, Assam Sishu Andha Vidyalaya, Moran Janamangal Adarsha Blind School, Jorhat Blind School, Guwahati Blind School, Ghilamara Blind School, Lakhimpur, Monfort School are the schools for visually impaired children of Assam. Accordingly, Government B.D.S. Deaf and Dumb School, Guwahati, School for learning impaired, Jorhat and Saraswati Bakdhwani Prasikshan Kendra, Guwahati are some of the schools of Assam for special need children.

The State Social Welfare Department of Assam was established in 1990. From the time of inception, the Department has initiated several schools particularly for the benefit and welfare of the physically handicapped. The department provides financial help to special schools. The Department has been started National Programme for Rehabilitation of Disabled Person in four districts, namely at Silchar Medical College, Silchar; Tezpur Mental Hospital for Mentally Sick and Allied Psychiatric Cases, Tezpur; Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh for hearing impaired and Silchar Medical College for Orthopedically Handicapped, Silchar. Vocational Rehabilitation and Training cum Production Centres are started at Boko, Diphu, Haflong and Guwahati for training for the handicapped.

In Assam, all learners regardless of their social, economic or physical ability, deserve education that would provide them with opportunities for life long learning, occupation, sustainable livelihood and meaningful sharing in society as productive citizens. The crucial need to advancement in the democratization of opportunities that would make possible all children to access education draws on the perception of inclusion as a principle to promote societal change.

Inclusion is the reality of our state as a result of demographic, economic, psychological and other reasons and has become an applicable field. For that reason, it is intended that the disabled students would overcome the difficulties by helping them in order to gain self-confidence, to adopt their conditions, not be
isolated from their peers, to be a natural member of the regular class and to participate in all the activities that the non-disabled students are engaged in as much as possible.

Assam, along with rest of the country, has large number of disabled children. Most of them are out of school. As per national estimate about 3-4% of the children in the 6-11 years age group in India are disabled. However, household surveys conducted in the districts of Assam indicate that there are only 1-2% disabled children in the relevant age group59 (Annual Progress Report, SSA, 2002). Whatever the estimate, Universalisation of Elementary Education cannot be achieved until and unless these children having physical or intellectual impairments are brought to school. Mild to moderate disabled children are integrated in general stream of formal education.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was an effort to universalize elementary education by community ownership of the school system. The programme puts a special focus on the groups of children with special needs. One such category was disabled children in and out of school. A diversity of approaches were planned to tackle the educational needs of these children. On account of separate administrative arrangements of schools present in the state, there is need to coordinate and coverage interventions across departments and local bodies responsible for elementary education for disabled children.

In Assam the Department of Education has taken up the education for Children With Special Needs (CWSN) through Sarba Siksha Abhijan. The programme has been named as Inclusive Education for Disabled. Under DPEP the educational programme for Special Needs Children was started in nine (9) districts of Assam, namely Barpeta, Darrang, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Sonitpur, Karbi-Anglong and Morigaon.

In 2002 Inclusive Education for Children With Special Needs started functioning under SSA. It was implemented in all the 23 districts of Assam. Later
on in another 4 (four) new districts also Inclusive Education Programme has been implemented.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan adopts a "zero rejection" policy on education of children with special needs so that no child will be left out of the educational system. Inclusive Education is one of the major components of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Mission in the state. In Assam the main thrust of Inclusive Education is to provide an integrated and inclusive education to all children with special needs in general schools. The interventions are conducted directly through the State and District Mission Office and its administrative structure. Inclusive Education programme is undergoing in four levels in Assam. These are:

1. State level
2. District level
3. Block level
4. Gaon panchayat level

State Programme Officer in state level, District Programme Officer in district level, Resource Teachers in block level and Volunteers in gaon panchayat level are appointed to run the functionaries of Inclusive Education. In our state through Inclusive Education steps are taken to facilitate integration of impaired children and out of school children with disability to receive education in general school, to provide medical help and quality education, to prepare suitable teaching learning process catering the need of the disabled children, to make all the disabled children achieve minimum level of learning and to support human resource development activities and training for required personnel. In 2002-03, when Inclusive Education for CWSN was implemented in Assam then a house to house survey was conducted in different districts to identify CWSN. The survey identified approximately 20000 children with special needs, out of which 8000 were out of school. Now, this number is increasing in an alarming rate. In our state
the following activities form the components of Inclusive Education Programme for Children With Special Need.

1. Early detection and identification of Children with Special Needs at an early age through a concerted drive.

2. Functional and formal assessment of each identified child.

3. Placing of every child with special needs in regular schools with needed support services.

4. Providing required assistive devices, aids and appliances to all children with special needs through convergence with Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, State Welfare Department, National Institutes and NGO.

5. Providing support services like physical access, resource room, special equipment, learning material, special educational techniques, remedial teaching, curricular adaptation etc.

6. Providing intensive teacher training to sensitize regular teachers on effective classroom management of children with special needs.

7. Providing resource support where necessary, through specially trained resource teachers particularly for teaching special skills to children with special needs.

8. Preparing and monitoring of individualized educational plan by the teachers for every child with special needs in consultation with parents and experts.

9. Providing parental training and community mobilization to the parents of children with disabilities by disseminating counseling and training on how to bring them up and teach them basic survival skills.

10. Constitution of resource groups to undertake effective planning
and management of the Inclusive Education programmes.

11. Strengthening of special schools to obtain resource support.

12. Removing architectural barriers in schools for easy access and providing disabled friendly facilities in schools.

13. Monitoring and evaluation to refine the programme from time to time by developing appropriate monitoring mechanisms.

In spite of radical changes and policies implemented throughout the country, it has become the need of the hour to find out the full implementation of policies and inclusive environment provided to the CWSN in schools. In this context, the investigator has undertaken this study entitled, “Socio-Economic Status and Education of Children with Special Needs: A Study Conducted in Nagaon and Morigaon District”

1.6. Significance of the study

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 educational scene in the country has undergone major change over the years, resulting in better provision of education and better educational practices.

All children belonging to the rich and poor, children engaging in some livelihood activities, living in rural as well as urban areas and children having mild to moderate physical or intellectual impairments are provided with facilities for elementary education in Assam. It has been observed in the Project Inclusive Education for the Disabled (PIED, 1987) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, along with UNICEF that children with mild and moderate disabilities are more in number than those with severe and profound disabilities. Thus their inclusion in the general stream would reduce the risk of school dropout.
Many attempts have been made to meet the diverse needs and necessity of the students in our country and presently education for severely or mild to moderately disabled children is receiving more attention.

Inclusive Education is the education of students with special needs in a way that addresses the student’s individual differences and needs. Inclusive Education for disabled is a challenging task for India. It is deeply rooted in our socio-economic and cultural situation. It throws a big challenge to our country and the government since the inception of this concept.

Children with special needs make a humanistic demand for paying extra attentions. A number of studies have been conducted, but in this area, in India and outside India it is generally found that the attitudes of society in general and of the parents in particular are not very favourable.

Though research has been conducted in the area of Inclusive Education which is for Children With Special Needs but not with special reference to Assam or a particular district of Assam as the area selected. It is one of the most trusted and challenging area of study. Manickam, D. tried to access importance and necessity of education for children with special needs (Manickam, D., 2008). In another study, Pandey, Y. of Jamia Milia Islamia tried to identify the barriers in the implementation of Inclusive Education at the elementary level and then to solve these barriers for effective functioning and implementation of education for CWSN (Pandey, Y. 2003). This study will help to know the socio-economic status and educational status of the CWSN. It will serve as a baseline study and therefore the findings of this study will help the policy-makers, teachers, volunteers, stake-holders as well as educational planners; which will ultimately help in the improvement of education for special need children. Therefore, the proposed study is expected to yield results, which will help in the improvement and effectiveness of individual support system for Children With Special Need.

Realizing the importance of education for CWSN, the investigator has taken this study in covering two districts of Assam.
The study is justified as in the following:

1. This study is justified on the ground that so far no studies has been conducted on Children With Special Needs (CWSN) under Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission of Assam, as the theme selected by the investigator.

2. This study will reflect the ground reality of the educational, infrastructural, recreational, medical and other facilities for the CSWN and to adopt measures for their learning.

3. This study will help to study about the socio-economic status of the parents of CWSN.

4. This study will provide a documentary data about the inclusion of impaired children to receive education in general school.

5. The findings of this study will help to adopt strategies for schooling of the Children With Special Needs.

1.7. Statement of the problem

The basic problems undertaken for investigation in the present study is to examine the infrastructural and environmental facilities, co-curricular activities and recreational facilities, transportation, midday meal, medical facilities, academic facilities, social and economic status and educational performance of the Children With Special Needs. Here, the study has been entitled as -

*Socio-Economic Status and Education of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) : A Study Conducted in Nagaon and Morigaon District.*
1.8. Operational Definition of the terms used

1.8.1. Socio-Economic Status

Socio-economic status refers to the social and economic status. ‘Social’ refers to people and the ways (level) they fit into the community in which they live. It reflects how well they are educated, have jobs etc. ‘Economic’ refers to the financial position of people within society and include, how much they regularly earn, whether own a house and the assets owned etc. The variables or components traditionally used to assess one’s social standing are education, occupation and income; however, additional indicators which are considered are employment status, professionals and even the presence of reading materials at home.

Good in his dictionary of education describes the meaning of socio-economic status as “the level indicative of both social and economic achievement of an individual or group.” In the present study occupation, economic / income, assets and education is regarded as the factors of socio-economic status.

1.8.2. Education of Children With Special Needs

Here in this study education of Children With Special Needs refers to infrastructural and environmental facility, co-curricular and recreational facility, academic support availed by CWSN, medical facility, facility of transport, uniform, mid-day meal etc. availed by the special need children in their school.

In the study the following terms are used:

1.8.3. Academic Support

In this study academic support refers to the academic facilities availed by CWSN in their schools. It refers to the availability of special educator and professionally trained teachers in the school, suitable course content, methods and techniques of teaching, suitable medium of instruction, teaching-learning materials, pre-vocational education and scholarship availed by CWSN.
1.8.4. Educational Performance

In this study educational performance refers to the grade received by the CWSN in their annual assessment. Annual assessments of CWSN include a child’s performance which he/she has shown in the curricular and co-curricular activities or academic and non-academic activities of the school during an academic session. Here, performance of children is measured by relying upon the grade obtained in assessment during the last single academic session.

1.9. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the socio-economic status of parents of CWSN of Nagaon and Morigaon district.

2. To study the CWSN friendly infrastructural and environmental facility, co-curricular and recreational facility availed by CWSN in the schools of Nagaon and Morigaon district.

3. To study the medical facility, provision of Parent-Teacher Association, facility of uniform, midday meal and transportation availed by CWSN in the schools of Nagaon and Morigaon district.

4. To study the academic support availed by CWSN in the schools of Nagaon and Morigaon district.

5. To make a comparative study of educational performance based on gender of CWSN of Nagaon and Morigaon district.

6. To study the correlation between the socio-economic status of parents of CWSN and educational performance of CWSN belonging to Nagaon and Morigaon district.
1.10. Hypotheses

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study the following hypotheses have been formulated.

1. The socio-economic status of the parents of CWSN are low.
2. Infrastructural and environmental facilities, co-curricular and recreational facilities availed by CWSN in the schools of Nagaon and Morigaon district are inadequate.
3. Medical facility, Parent-Teacher Association, midday meal, uniform and transportation facilities are not satisfactory.
4. Academic support availed by CWSN in the schools is adequate in Nagaon and Morigaon district.
5. There is no significant gender difference in educational performance of CWSN of Nagaon and Morigaon district.
6. There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic status of parents of CWSN and educational performance of CWSN belonging to Nagaon and Morigaon district.

1.11. Area of the study

Assam is one of the seven states located in North-Eastern region of India. It was mentioned as Pragijyotisha in Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharat (Barpujari, H.K. 2001, p. 1). The present name of the state is derived from the word Ahom, the native people referring to the Tai Conquerors Assam i.e. "peerless" or "undefeated".

Assam is the second largest state in Northeast India, with an area of 78438 sq.km. (Statistical Handbook, Assam 2007, p. 2). Assam is surrounded by Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar on the northeast and north-eastern border, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya on the southern border,
Bangladesh and West Bengal on the west and again Arunachal Pradesh on the north east. According to the 2011 census, there are 3,11,69,272 persons in Assam, out of which 1,59,54,927 are male and 1,52,14,345 are female. 87.10% of total population lives in rural areas and 12.90% lives in urban areas. The sex ratio of the state is 954 and density of population is 397 per sq.km. (Census Report of India, 2011)64. Assamese is the main language of the state and serves as lingua franca for its people. The economy of Assam is overwhelmingly agricultural. Assam is constituted of 27 districts including two hill districts. The literacy rate of Assam is 73.18% of which 78.81% are male and 67.27% are female (Census Report, 2011)65. The state has 199 pre-primary schools, 30499 primary schools, 9716 middle schools, 4776 high schools and 620 higher secondary schools. (Statistical Handbook, Assam 2007, p. 183)66. Assam has 5 Universities, 1 IIT, 2 Colleges of Agriculture, 3 Engineering Colleges, 72 Law Colleges, 2 Veterinary Colleges, 7 Medical Colleges (including Homeo, Ayurvedic, Dental, Pharmacy, Nursing), 348 Arts / Science / Commerce Colleges, 42 NCTE recognized B.Ed. Colleges, 1 SCERT, 18 DIETS, 19 Basic Training Centre and 7 Normal Schools.

Out of 27 districts of Assam, two districts namely Nagaon and Morigaon is taken as the area of the present study. In Morigaon district, there are a large number of SC, ST and minority group of people and in Nagaon district tea tribe population are there along with general and other backward community people. Therefore, on the basis of the heterogeneous population Nagaon and Morigaon district is chosen for the study.

1.11.1. Nagaon district

The central Assam district of Nagaon (spelled by the British as Nowgong) is one of the largest district of Assam.

1.11.1.1. History

The history of the district as an administrative unit can be firmly traced only from the time of the British annexation; Nagaon passed into British hands in 1826 and was declared a district in 1833. The headquarters of the district were
established in Nagaon in 1839. At one time, a large chunk of the Naga Hills, the Mikir hills and North Cachar hills were part of the district. With the passage of time, they were sliced away to form separate tribal district with the autonomous hill district councils.

1.11.1.2. Location and Area

The North of Nagaon district is bounded by Sonitpur district and the Brahmaputra River, South is bounded by West Karbi Anglong and North Cachar hills and East is bounded by East Karbi Anglong and Golaghat District. Nagaon district sprawls across 4435.3 square kilometers.

1.11.1.3. Towns, Villages and Administration

Nagaon district is comprising of 7 (seven) towns and 1421 villages. The district has 3 (three) sub-division, 11 (eleven) educational block, 18 (eighteen) anchalik panchayat, 241 gaon panchayat and 5(five) revenue circles.

1.11.1.4. Population

Total population of the district is 2826006 according to the census of 2011, comprising of 1440307 male and 1385699 female. Density of population is 718 per sq.km. Male-female ratio of the district is 962.

1.11.1.5. Literacy and Education

According to census, 2011 the total average percentage of literacy is 73.78% of which male average literacy rate is 78.19 and female average literacy rate is 69.21%. Total number of government Primary School in the district is 2008. There are total 443 government Middle Schools, 141 High Schools, 55 Higher Secondary Schools, 25 number of colleges, 1 Polytechnic, 1 ITI, 1 Fishery College, 1 Law College, 2 Nos. of B.Ed. Colleges, 1 Industrial Training Institute and 1 Basic Training Centre in the district.
1.11.2. Morigaon district

1.11.2.1. History

The history of Morigaon is obscure. One famous traditional ruler of the region was Arimatta whose history is shrouded in mystery. After Arimattass death, Jongalbalahu, his son ruled over the region. Jongalbalahu was ultimately killed by the Kacharis with a bamboo spear near Kajalimukh.

1.11.2.2. Location and Area

Morigaon is comparatively a new district of Assam situated on the southern bank of Brahmaputra river. The district covers an area of 155.2 sq. km and its headquarter is situated at Morigaon town. It is bounded on the North by the Brahmaputra river, on the East by Nagaon district, on the South by Karbi Anglong district and Meghalaya state and on the West by Kamrup and Darrang districts.

1.11.2.3. Population

The total population of the Morigaon district according to 2011 census is 957853, comprising of 485328 male and 472525 female. Density of population in the district is 618 per sq.km. The male-female ratio of the district is 974.

1.11.2.4. Towns, Villages and Administration

As per 2011 census the Morigaon district is at present comprising of 3 towns and 636 villages. The district has 1 Sub-Division, 5 Community Development Block, 4 Educational Development Block, 5 Revenue Circles, 7 Anchalik Panchayat and 85 Gaon Panchayat.

1.11.2.5. Literacy and Education

According to census 2011 the percentage of literacy in the district is 69.37% out of which 73.66% are male and 64.99% are female. There are 816 primary schools, 283 middle schools, 138 high schools, 14 higher secondary schools and 6 intermediate junior college in Morigaon District.
1.12. Delimitation of the study

The study was subjected to several limitations

1. The present study is limited to the prevailing status of the Children With Special Needs i.e. the disabled children in an Inclusive setting.

2. The study covers government and provincialised primary schools (both lower and upper primary), Middle-English (M.E.) and Middle-Vernacular (M.V.) schools of 4 (four) educational blocks (Nagaon Sadar, Khagorijan, Kaliabor and Rupahi) of Nagaon district and 2 (two) educational blocks (Mayong and Kapili) of Morigaon district.

3. The study covers the CWSN between the age group 6-14 years of age i.e. CWSN of class-I to class VIII with mild to moderate disability.

4. The educational performance in inclusive setting will be assessed.

5. The term education used in the research title means educational facilities and educational performance of CWSN.

6. The result of the study is not generalized to the normal children.

1.13. Organization of the study

The study consists of seven chapters.

Chapter-I is the introduction of the study. This chapter highlights information of Children with Special Needs and their education, termed as Inclusive Education. Statement of the problem under study, significance of the study, objectives of the study, hypotheses and delimitations of the study and definition of the major terms used in the study are described in this chapter.
Chapter-II deals with the review of literature and research reviews in the area under study. These reviews are shown as related works done at international level, at national level and at regional level and presented chronologically.

Chapter-III deals with the methodology adopted for this study.

Chapter-IV presents descriptive and statistical data along with their analysis and interpretations. Analysis is done separately for each objective.

Chapter-V presents the major findings of the study. All the major findings are stated here objective wise.

Chapter-VI presents few cases that have been studied during the time of field study.

Chapter-VII summarizes the study in terms of the summary, conclusions based on analyses, implication of the findings of the study, recommendations and recommendations for future research.

1.14. Chapter Summary:

Education of Children With Special Needs has become a common theme of all discourses on basic education the world over. India has also got into the act and incorporated its intent through a number of policy documents, legislations and programme strategies to educate this group. But today, the challenge is to implement and simultaneously monitor to improve the quantity and quality of education for these Special Need Children which is termed as Inclusive Education. The purpose of the study is to measure socio-economic status of the parents of CWSN, to study the infrastructural, co-curricular and recreational facility, medical facility, parent teacher association, midday meal, uniform and transportation facility, academic support and educational performance received by special need children and to find out the relationship among the socio-economic status of parents of CWSN and educational performance of CWSN. The study is significant because it will reflect the ground reality of education for special need children, will
help to adopt strategies for schooling and education of the CWSN. This study may yield some interesting results which may be helpful for the policy makers for enhancing a positive attitude in the mind of the people towards Special Need Children and their education, which will ultimately help in achieving the Education For All (EFA) in particular.
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LOCATION MAP OF ASSAM
STUDY AREA IS NAGAON & MORIGAON DISTRICT

Fig. I : Map of Assam
MAP OF NAGAON DISTRICT SHOWING THE EDUCATION BLOCKS

Legend

ROADS
Railway
District Boundary
BLOCK
STUDY BLOCK
LOCATION

Fig. II: Map of Nagaon District
MAP OF MORIGAON DISTRICT SHOWING THE EDUCATION BLOCKS

Legend
- STUDY BLOCK
- BLOCK
- LOCATION
- Road
- Railway
- District Boundary

Fig. III: Map of Morigaon District