



**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the background of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework of the topic. It discusses in detail the historical development of Inclusive Education. It also provides a descriptive rationale of the study, operational definitions, firmly stated objectives, hypotheses, research questions and describes significance of the study along with defining the delimitations of the present study.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

*“Inclusive education is a multidimensional concept that includes the celebration and valuing of difference and diversity and consideration of human rights, social justice and equity issues, as well as the social model of disability and a socio-political model of education”* (Hornby, 2014). Inclusive education has received widespread attention on a global scale. Ensuring educational equity is not solely a matter of policy, but rather a pervasive practice that must be implemented across all levels. In the Indian context, the constitution grants equal rights to all individuals as per its preamble, which commences with the phrase "WE, the people of India." Kothari Commission, during the period of 1964-66, proposed that education for individuals with disabilities should not solely be based on humanitarian principles, but also on utilitarian grounds (Kaul, 2015). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the year 2000 has advocated for the implementation of Inclusive Education as part of its Universalization of Elementary Education and Zero Rejection Policy. The 86th constitutional amendment RTE Act 2009 has established education as a fundamental right, thereby highlighting the pressing need for Inclusive Education in contemporary society.

The origins of Inclusive Education can be traced back to the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Salamanca in 1994. The conference that took place in Spain in 1994 suggested that educational institutions need to provide inclusive environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students, regardless of their individual differences. It has been suggested that educational

institutions should include students from diverse socio-economic and geographical backgrounds. Inclusive education is a pedagogical approach that aims to provide equitable and unbiased access to education for all individuals, regardless of their background or abilities. It fosters the principle of right of entry, involvement, and accomplishment of all the learners keeping in consideration that there should not be any kinds of discrimination on any grounds.

The RPWD Act, 2016 have also laid major emphasis and contributed immensely by providing specific types for persons with disability to understand their needs and demands more clearly. The Act stipulates 21 types of persons with disabilities. Inclusive Education thus tries to eliminate all the barriers and try to provide an equal place for all these children to learn from one another and grow. To achieve this, trained efficient teachers, proper infrastructure, adaptive teaching-learning materials are also of much importance.

Inclusive Education is a broad concept. It constitutes of various components dealing with various aspects of inclusion such as a) Infrastructural resources b) Attitudinal Behaviour c) Curricular Adaptation d) Teaching Practices e) Training of Teachers f) Community Partnership (UNESCO, 1994; Bharti, 2016). Inclusive Education covers the following components in its perspective-

- Infrastructural resources: Barrier-free buildings (Ramp facilities), Laboratories, Assistive technologies, Resources rooms, Access to drinking water, Toilets, etc.
- Attitudinal Behaviour: Positive attitude and clear perception towards Inclusive Education.
- Curricular Adaptation: Curricular adaptation as per inclusive setting. Modification of the learning environment, Evaluation procedure.
- Teaching Practices: Differentiated Instruction (DI), Universal Design of Learning (UDL), Individual Education Plans (IEP), Cooperative learning, Collaboration (among teachers and other professionals).
- Training of teachers: Pre-service and in-service training of teachers for developing their Self-efficacy and skills to work in inclusive setting.
- Community Partnership: School-Community partnership, Family involvement, Public Awareness, Engagement of voluntary organisations.

For developing a successful Inclusive Education (IE) system it is imperative that these components are adequately amalgamated in the teacher training programmes, so that the teachers could be prepared to face the challenges and work in Inclusive setting (Bharti, 2014, Julka, 2004 as cited by NCERT position paper, 2006). Julka (2004) has laid stress on the need for all the Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) to make certain that Inclusive Education theory and practical aspects are included in their programmes (NCERT, 2006). It is pivotal to train the prospective teachers in relation to the stated components.

The realization of Inclusive Education as a viable concept is contingent upon a crucial factor, namely the presence of adequately trained educators who possess the requisite disposition to effectively navigate its implementation (NCERT, 2005). Each educator within an inclusive educational setting assumes a crucial role in ensuring the successful execution of inclusionary practices. Research on Inclusive Education has identified four core values that undergird teacher's competence in developing inclusive practices; (a) Valuing learner diversity as a resource and asset, (b) Providing support to all the learners, (c) Developing skills of collaboration and teamwork to work with the experts and (d) Making constant development of personal and professional aspect (UNESCO, 2017).

In India, the concept of IE is still at the initial stage. Therefore it is important to enable the elementary level teachers to successfully implement the core idea of Inclusive Education in teacher education.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework of Inclusive Education**

### **1.2.1 Conceptual Understanding of Inclusive Education**

Defining Inclusive Education requires vivid and clear understanding of the concept. In general view, Inclusive Education is about welcoming students from all the backgrounds, with various types of abilities and giving them a space where they can learn together and grow as per their respective abilities. Inclusive Education aims at removing all kinds of exclusion from the education system. It is possible to define Inclusive Education as an educational approach that proposes schools in which all pupils are able to participate and all are treated as valuable school members. In the realm of education, there exists a pedagogical approach and implementation strategy that aims to enhance the acquisition of knowledge and engagement of every student in a collaborative learning environment. (Moriña, 2017). But, the concept of Inclusive Education had been very indistinguishable for people to understand (Singal, 2005).

People often confuse ‘inclusion’ with ‘integration’. These two are total different concept. Integration is about placement of the students in the same educational set up with adjusted facilities. However, inclusion is about creating and modifying the whole system of education as per the need of the students. As defined by Salamanca statement (1994) Inclusive Education is where “*all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups*” (UNSECO, 1994) could be taught together in the same school. It had stated that the educational institutions should be prepared to deal with the diverse needs of the students in an Inclusive classroom.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has defined Inclusive Education as “*a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning*” (UNSECO, 2005). It further looked at IE not as a static concept but as a process of dealing with the diversity of the classroom. Booth and Ainscow (2002) defined Inclusive Education as a practice of eliminating or significantly lowering obstacles to learning and engagement for all children, irrespective of their special educational requirements. It intends to meet the needs of students with special needs by raising their participation and enrollment with the belief that it is the duty of the regular educational set-up to educate all children. This process necessitates adjustments to the curriculum, content, teaching methods, structures, and strategies as well as a shared vision that includes all children.

It further claims that inclusion is apart from being a process; it is related to identifying the barrier in educational set up and removing it, ensuring fruitful participation where students’ achievement is also ensured and taking into account of those groups of students who are at the risk of exclusion (UNSECO, 2005). Inclusive Education therefore, also encompasses students from marginalized community, students who are at risk, children of migrant laborers’, children who have faced abuses, natural calamities and medical conditions (Singal, 2005). To broaden the scope of Inclusive Education and defining it in wider sense Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016 had rightfully attempted to include 21 types of disabilities to be included in an Inclusive Education system.

The goal of IE is to transform educational institutions, such as schools and educational systems, into loving, nurturing, and supporting educational communities where the requirements of each individual student are met (Fenandes, 2010). Moreover, it supports the students to promote their all round development. An inclusive standpoint on quality-based education is one that emphasises the necessity of ensuring that educational opportunities contribute to the successful incorporation of individuals and groups into the larger social fabric as much as possible. Because it seeks the complete engagement of all students, inclusive education is an indispensable element of any high-quality educational programme (UNESCO, 2005).

Inclusive Education requires a gradual move and it seeks systemic changes in the education system. At first, to welcome students from all the aspects and sections of society the basic barriers has to be removed; starting with improvement of infrastructure, curricular materials, training of teachers and other professionals, building a strong leadership, developing a positive outlook and self-efficacy of the people involved in inclusion such as teachers, principals, parents, students and community members.

#### **1.2.1.1 Infrastructure for Inclusive Education**

Accessibility is the prime parameter of inclusion. The first criterion is to welcome all the students in the classrooms from primary to higher education level. For that adaptation in the structure and physical facilities is most important. Providing students a barrier free environment for easy movement is the first step towards inclusion.

Appropriate infrastructural facilities ensure security to students who are having physical disability. Reports have stated that due to poor toilet facilities many female students had drop out of schools. This can be an even more serious problem in rural areas, particularly because often sufficient facilities for water sanitation and hygiene are not available for girls including managing menstrual hygiene (UNICEF, 2017). Infrastructural changes such as constructing ramps for smooth interconnection from outside and inside the buildings, disabled friendly toilet facilities, separate toilet facilities for all the genders, leveled ground for smooth movement of wheelchairs, adapted classroom environment such as large doors, proper ventilation should be made available in all educational institutions (Chumo & Kosgei, 2019). All the major commissions and policy reports have emphasised on developing infrastructure as

major step towards building an inclusive educational environment in schools. Recently, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in the year 2022 had issued an accessibility guideline for teacher education institutions where it has stressed on developing an inclusive infrastructure at the teacher education institutions as well.

### **1.2.1.2 Curriculum for Inclusive Education**

Apart from developing the infrastructure, Inclusive Education also demands to modify the curriculum as per the diverse needs of the students. Appropriate modifications in the curriculum and in the mode of assessment would facilitate learning of students with special needs including disability (RPWD, 2016). Inclusive Education requires a curriculum that would be able to address the diversity of the classroom and different learning abilities of students. Modification of the curriculum is an instructional method that provides students an enhanced access to a variety of informational and material resources. It's a goal-oriented procedure in which educators customise their method of instruction to the specific requirements of their students by personalizing the content they present, the methods they use to deliver it, and the tools they employ to evaluate student progress (Saziso & Chimhenga, 2021).

These are the curricular changes that teachers include into lesson plans so that pupils who have specific requirements can follow them. Modifications to the curriculum involve various different combinations of content, conceptual complexity, educational goals, and teaching style as opposed to establishing scaffolding and bridges between persons involved in the educational process and the existing curriculum (Saziso & Chimhenga, 2021).

### **1.2.1.3 Perception of Teachers towards Inclusive Education**

For ensuring inclusion in schools and in any educational institutions it is evident to train the teachers to monitor and execute inclusion. Inclusive Education is a practice that is being performed by the teachers inside the classroom. Therefore, it is very much essential to train teachers with appropriate skills and teaching methods and strategies so that they can facilitate an inclusive classroom environment. Apart from it, developing positive attitude among teachers is another important aspect of Inclusive Education. Researches over the years have stated that teachers' perception plays a major role in the achievement of IE.

Teachers play the role of a bridge between policies to practice. Their perception and attitude towards inclusion directs their behavior and functions carried out in an inclusive classroom (Emmers, Baeyens & Petry, 2020; Kilimo, 2014; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Zagona, Kurth & MacFarland, 2017; Apers, 2016; Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle, 2006). Teachers' attitudinal behavior also controls their job direction and self-efficacy for dealing with students with special needs in an inclusive classroom (Saloviita, 2020). Teachers need to perceive inclusive education not as an extra burden in their academic activities but diversity should be accepted as a nature of their classroom. Developing a positive perception towards inclusion very crucial as it builds their self-efficacy and belief for addressing needs of diverse range of students in their classroom (Shani & Hebel, 2016; Emmers, Baeyens & Petry, 2020).

Therefore, it becomes very essential to develop teachers' perception towards inclusive education through incorporating it in the very core activities and curriculum of their teacher training programme.

#### **1.2.1.4 Self-efficacy of Teachers for Inclusive Education**

*“Efficacy belief operates as a key factor in generative system of human competence. Hence, different people with similar skills, or the same person under different circumstances may perform poorly, adequately or extraordinarily, depending on fluctuations in their belief of personal efficacy”* (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is the assessment people make about their own talents and capacities to organise and execute particular type of actions for accomplishing a perceived objective (Bandura, 1986). It is imperative for teachers in Inclusive Education to belief on their own capabilities for handing students with special needs. Teachers' self-efficacy in adopting inclusive practices in Inclusive classrooms is very significant. Researchers have proved that teachers' self-self-efficacy has directly linked with their attitude and perception about inclusive education. Teachers who are having high self-efficacy seem confident in handing students with special needs. They could be seen efficacious in adopting differentiated teaching methods as per the requirements of the students, make needful changes in the curriculum, efficient in classroom management and in developing assessment strategies for an inclusive classroom.



Teachers at the time of there are required to develop their self-efficacy for adopting various strategies of teaching, ability to manage an diversified classroom and efficacy in building relationships and collaborating with other professionals such as with teachers, parents and community members (Ismailos, Gallagher, Bennett & Xiaobin Li, 2019; Kuyini, Desai & Sharma, 2020). Those teachers who are found to be more efficacious they are less anxious about including students with special needs in their classroom.

Palmer (2006) have stated that a high sense of self-efficacy motivates educators to go the additional mile for helping students having difficulty in learning, whereas a low sense of self-efficacy causes them to doubt their students' abilities. Studies had found that self-efficacy acts as a predicator of positive perception towards Inclusive Education (Savolainen, 2012; Norton, 2013; Kuyini, Desai & Sharma, 2020; Mamgain, 2017). Therefore, self-efficacy of the teachers also holds significant ground on implementation of IE. It is a common practise for educational systems to lack the specialised human and physical capital necessary to fulfil the specific requirements of children with disabilities. Lack of such facilities denies the same possibilities to these children as their non-disabled peers (Mizunoya, Mitra, & Yamasaki, 2016).

### **1.2.2 Elementary Teacher Education Programme**

Elementary Teacher Education Programme is being provided by the District Institute of Teacher Education (DIETs) in India. DIETs were established in India by the suggestions of National Policy on Education 1986. It was mainly focused on promoting the elementary and adult education at the grass root level by providing academic and other resource support (GOI, 1986). DIETs are also responsible for closely working with the elementary level schools. DIETs could act as an executive functionary for putting into practice Inclusive Education at elementary level. Therefore, it becomes essential on the part of the DIETs to ensure that the pre-service teachers are skilled enough for implementing Inclusive Education in the elementary schools.

Appropriate Integration of Inclusive Education in the Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) programme is necessary to attain this goal. It will prepare the teachers in such a way that they develop a positive attitude and efficacy towards Inclusive Education and so that they can be adequately proficient enough to address the varied needs of the classroom for inclusion.

### **1.3 Inclusion in Education**

Inclusion in education as a phenomenon is so vital that it is not viable to imagine modern education system without making it inclusive. It is about encouraging participation of learners in the educational set-up by ensuring the accreditation of their presence and involvement at various activities. Removal of exclusion and discrimination at any level is also required to be ensured. Inclusion is about being more amenable to the multiplicity of children's backgrounds their interests, their experiences, their accumulated knowledge and skills (NCERT, 2020). The idea of inclusion in education is not merely about placement of students with special need; it is about generating and creating all kinds of facilities and environment that s/he would require to be in any educational institutions. Inclusion in education is related to its all dimensions starting from the enrolment of the child, modifying the physical environments, adaptations of the curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation procedure etc. Adaptations at all these levels would contribute to creation of an inclusive environment in an educational set-up. It requires the management and authorities of any educational system to act as an anchor and facilitator for promotion of inclusion.

Inclusion is often perceived as an imposed concept in the existing educational system. Therefore, to promote inclusion another important task is to develop a positive attitude among the stakeholders such as teachers, principals, management teams, students, parents and the community in general. So as to, create conducive human environment wherein all the students can flourish together (Gulyani, 2017).

Inclusion also seeks to provide equalisation of educational opportunities to all the learners keeping in mind their varied needs and requirements. There is a need to be more accountable for both social and physical inclusion in educational institutions by acknowledging the students from various socio-economic backgrounds, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and having diverse physical needs. Building the students' confidence and also preparing them to feel an imperative part of the larger society and not a segregated entity. All these students must feel belonged to the place where they come to learn, this is what inclusion in education could be defined as (NCERT, 1993-2000).

Inclusion can be broadly categorised from perspectives such as –

- Physical inclusion
- Social inclusion
- Cognitive inclusion

### **1.3.1 Understanding Physical Inclusion**

Inclusion generally perceived as a form physical inclusion. It promotes including students with physical disabilities in the education system. All the policies and programmes and acts have ensured inclusion of students with disabilities in common classroom. Acts such as Person With Disability (PWD) Act 1995, RPWD Act 2016 and Universalisation of Elementary Education have emphasised on inclusion of students with physical disabilities in regular classroom, ensuring physical inclusion in educational institutions. Buildings ramps and creating all the infrastructural modifications in the structure of educational institutes promote physical inclusion.

### **1.3.2 Understanding Social Inclusion**

Broader definition of Inclusive Education includes providing equal educational opportunities for students from marginalised backgrounds, students from poor socio-economic conditions and students who have been historically kept out the system of education such as students from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning or queer (LGBTQ) community. The goal of Inclusive Education is to find ways to adapt educational structures to accommodate a wide variety of student requirements. Policies to advance the quality of education at all levels of education, both formally and informally, should go hand in hand with initiatives to increase enrolment fostering social inclusion. To promote social inclusion teachers must become more sensitive and develop empathy, collaboration for developing a healthy atmosphere in educational set-up (Marsela, 2014).

### **1.3.3 Understanding Cognitive Inclusion**

Inclusive classrooms by nature are differentiated on cognitive grounds. Students in an inclusive classroom carry different level of cognitive power. A student who is a gifted learner is not in the same cognitive level as a slow learner or student with learning disability. Teachers in inclusive classrooms could adopt cognitive inclusion by preparing the content materials as per nature of their classroom.

Adoption of teaching strategies and teaching methods should also consider cognitive level of students in terms of their participation and performance. Teachers need to break down the learning materials into small parts so as to facilitate learning at every level (NCERT, 1993-2000; Chandra, 2018).

These three perspectives of inclusion are considered while defining Inclusive Education. Inclusion in education has numerous benefits relating to social and psychological development of learners with special needs and learners without special needs. It intends to create a harmonious and sustainable education system for building a strong foundation for upcoming inclusive society. When it comes to defining Inclusive Education there has been a lot of vagueness related to it. It is very important to understand the idea and concept of Inclusive Education with its basic principles (NCERT, 2006).

## **1.4 Types of Children with Special Needs**

### **A. Types of Disabilities**

Lately, RPWD Act 2016 has identified 21 types of disabilities. These are as follows-

- **Blindness:** Blindness is absolute blackness of vision with the inability to distinguish darkness from bright light in either eye.
- **Low-vision:** Low-vision could be defined as visual acuity not exceeding 6/18 or less than 20/60 up to 3/60 or 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with best available corrections; or field of vision subtending an angle of less than 40 degrees up to 10 degrees.
- **Leprosy cured Persons:** Mycobacterium leprae causes leprosy, sometimes called Hansen's disease (HD). The condition mostly affects skin, peripheral nerves, upper respiratory tract mucosa, and eyes. Leprosy can affect anyone from birth to old age.
- **Hearing Impairment:** Hearing loss is hearing impairment. Deaf and hard-of-hearing people have it. "Deaf" denotes speech-frequency hearing loss of 70 dB in both ears. "Hard of hearing" is 60 to 70 dB speech frequency hearing loss in both ears.

- **Loco motor disability:** Loco motor Disability is leg disability that prevents movement. It is usually considered a bone, joint, and muscular impairment. It causes movement difficulty.
- **Dwarfism:** Dwarfism is a development abnormality that causes an individual to be significantly shorter than their peers.
- **Intellectual disability:** Intellectual disability also regarded as "mental retardation" (MR), is a condition characterised by significant limitations in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behaviour, in everyday functioning.
- **Specific learning disability:** People with specific learning disabilities have trouble with a variety of academic tasks, including paying attention in class, processing information, forming coherent thoughts, reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic. It's possible that one or more of these skills will be impaired.
- **Mental illness:** Mental illness is a serious impairment of thinking, emotion, perception, orientation, or memory that severely impairs judgement, conduct, reality recognition, or daily existence.
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** ASD affects communication and behaviour. Any age can diagnose autism. Autism impacts cognitive, emotional, social, and physical health.
- **Cerebral Palsy:** CP is disabling impairment in muscular coordination caused by brain injury characterises the physical disorder known as cerebral palsy (CP). Cerebral palsy does not worsen with time; hence it is not a progressive condition. However, the severity of the impairment may worsen over time due to muscular disuse. Cerebral Palsy could be referred as an irreversible and lifelong disability.
- **Muscular Dystrophy (MD):** Muscular dystrophy (MD) refers to a collection of inherited conditions characterised by progressive muscle weakness and atrophy. MD is a progressive disease, which means that symptoms worsen over time.
- **Chronic neurological conditions:** Another type of disability stated by this act are multiple sclerosis, parkinson's disease. This condition damages the brain cells.
- **Multiple sclerosis:** In this condition the immune system targets the brain and spinal cord. It damages neuron myelin sheaths. Exposing nerve fibres disrupts nerve information flow.
- **Parkinson's disease:** Movement is affected by Parkinson's disease (PD). Parkinson's causes tremors and rigidity in the person.

- **Speech and language disability:** it is an impairment that cannot be rectified, such as laryngectomy or aphasia that permanently hinders one or more aspects of speech and language owing to organic or neurological causes.
- **Thalassemia:** Thalassemia, a genetic blood condition, which causes improper haemoglobin production. Red Blood Cells contain haemoglobin. Hemoglobin transports oxygen. Thalassemia destroys many red blood cells, causing anaemia. Thalassemia causes anaemia, pale complexion, weariness, and black urine.
- **Haemophilia:** Hemophilia is a disease of the blood caused by an insufficiency of clotting proteins. It takes more time for bleeding to stop when these proteins are missing.
- **Sickle Cell Disease:** A series of blood illnesses known as sickle cell disease causes red blood cells (RBCs) to take on a sickle form, become distorted, and eventually die. Misshaped red blood cells are much less efficient at transporting oxygen around the body. The cause of the illness is genetics.
- **Multiple Disabilities:** Multiple disabilities are two or more conditions that impair learning or other essential skills. These limitations may be motor and sensory.
- **Acid Attack victims:** Victims of acid attacks are people who have been deformed as a result of being attacked with acid or another caustic chemical.

RPWD Act 2016 specifies these disabilities and encourages inclusion of learners suffering from all these types of disabilities. Apart from it, students from various marginalised backgrounds such as-

- **Gender identities:** Gender identity includes male and female students and also students who identify themselves in different gender identity such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning persons.
- **Linguistic diversity:** linguistic diversity addresses the students coming from different language backgrounds. There are various communities and cultures are prevalent in Assam. Thus, maintaining linguistic diversity is very much essential.
- **Disadvantaged socio-economic conditions:** Students from the disadvantaged section such Schedule caste, Schedule tribe, OBC and students from low economic background.
- **Children from remote areas:** Students from hilly regions and other remote areas.
- **Children of migrant labourers and victims of vulnerable situations:** Children on seasonal labourers, migrant workers, children from flood effected regions.

## 1.5 Genesis of Inclusive Education from International Context

The notion of IE first evolved from the principle of Human Right declaration 1948 which ascertains equal right of education to all individual. Article 26 of Human Right Declaration stated as *“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”* This has laid the foundation of developing an Inclusive Education system for every student irrespective of any differences. Subsequently, Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) 1975 passed under United States Supreme Court prioritized the education of handicapped students and intended to provide free and appropriate education to them (Coates, 1985). This had emphasized the need to make education accessible to the marginalized groups as well. Later, in the year 1990 EHA was replaced by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1990) assuring free and appropriate education is provided to children with disabilities in a least preventive setting. Even though, Human Right Declaration and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act did not explicitly affirmed about creating an Inclusive Education system but the underlying principle was to remove every form of discrimination from the education system; which later strengthen the foundation of Inclusive Education policies.

Later, World Declaration for Education for All (1990) had also proposed the idea of Inclusive Education system. In article no. 3 of World Declaration of Education it has been stated that equitable education should be made available to all children and youth. It further emphasized on education of women and education of socio-economically disadvantaged group (SEDGs). This declaration officially stated that education of disabled groups requires special attention and should be given priority.

In 1994, Inclusive Education became an official topic of discussion during the Salamanca Conference in Spain. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education was adopted during this meeting. Under the representation of 92 governments and 25 international organisations, the Inclusive Education guiding principle was created. It was said that children of all ages and backgrounds, regardless of their physical condition, intelligence, social or emotional

status, language proficiency, or any other characteristic, are eligible for the programme. Children from rural or nomadic communities, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities, and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups will be educated in the same school setting. It has directed the educational system to establish and implement the necessary modifications to facilitate Inclusive Education.

Later on, UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2006 had also very finely supported the idea of Inclusive Education. In its article 24, it is emphasized that-

- It is the right of people with disabilities to get an education. In order to realise this right without prejudice and on the basis of equal opportunity, States are obligated to establish and maintain education systems that are accessible to all students.
- The notion has been put forth that education, at every stage of life, ought to be oriented towards the attainment of objectives such as the complete realization of human potential, the cultivation of a sense of dignity and self-esteem, and the reinforcement of reverence for human rights, basic freedoms, and human multiplicity. Additionally, education should facilitate the development of the personality, abilities, and creativity of individuals with disabilities to their maximum potential, and empower them to participate actively in a society that is free and democratic.
- It has also ensured that no student with disability shall be debarred from free and mandatory primary and secondary education. Ensuring that they receive all kinds of supports for continuing their education.
- It had also laid emphasis on preparing teachers and professionals who could navigate and manage students with disabilities.

Lately, United Nations with all the member states in the year 2015 adopted the sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030. It had also given utmost importance on making the education system inclusive in nature. SDGs 2030 envisage creating an inclusive society where education would be available to all its citizens.



The goal four Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of envision to provide inclusive and equitable education system where there would be no gender disparities, inclusive environment for all learners, trained teachers to address the requirements of children and providing skills and knowledge to children for acquiring sustainable development goals. SDGs also laid stress on strengthening the teacher education system for promoting equitable and Inclusive Education.

### **1.6 Genesis of Inclusive Education from Indian Context**

After independence the constitution of India had made education a primary goal to be achieved for all its citizens. Despite its comprehensive scope, the constitutional provision in India that promotes equality in education is found in article 14, which states that all citizens are equal before the law, and article 15, which states that no one may be discriminated against. Article 41 of the Indian constitution strives to guarantee exceptional rights such as the right to labour, the right to education, and the right to public assistance for people in particular circumstances such as having a disability. Meanwhile, eighty sixth amendment of Indian constitution stated article 45 as providing free and compulsory for all the children till the age of fourteen years (Kaushik, 2019).

The Secondary Education Commission 1952-53 showed concern for education children with disabilities. This commission had agreed on the need of educating children with disabilities and had recommended that special schools should be opened. It has further recognised the need for adopting the curriculum as per individualised needs, although it was mainly addressing to individual difference in the classroom.

Later, in the year 1964-66 Kothari Commission was introduced and it was the first education commission of independent India. Kothari commission had covered various aspects of education including school education, agricultural education, technical education and education finance and so on and so forth. While discovering the reasons for inequality in educational opportunities this commission had stated that lack of education among students from backward socio-economic conditions bear major responsibility of it. It had also stated that equal educational opportunity should be provided to the handicapped children. Educational provision for blind, deaf, orthopedically handicapped and mentally retarded should be made available.

Establishment of special schools and consideration for integration of handicapped children was also raised in the Kothari commission (GoI, 1966).

In the year 1968 National Policy on Education had also pursued the recommendations given by Kothari commission and laid arduous efforts for addressing the issues of education for backward classes, girls and physically and mentally handicapped children. It also focuses on creating an integrated education system and bringing the students with disability in the regular schools (Kaushik, 2019; GoI, 1966).

Further, National Policy on Education was again adapted in the year 1986 and a Programme of Action (1992) was also developed for its implementation. The major aim of this policy was to provide education to all students irrespective of their social background, statement of belief, location and gender at all level of education (Kaushik, 2019). In terms of inclusion in education of students with disability and socio-economically marginalised students, it mainly focuses on providing incentives, appointment of teachers from similar backgrounds and creation of residential schools for children. Regarding education of handicapped (as mentioned in the report) children it certainly aimed at preparing them for dealing with their immediate environment. The commission had also suggested modifying the curriculum and development of evaluation guides for special schools to address the needs of the handicapped children. NCERT had been given the responsibility to work on it (GOI, 1986). This policy realised the importance of grass rote level functioning and monitoring therefore, to strengthen the teacher education system at ground level District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) were established under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for restructuring and reorganization of teacher education at elementary level in India. The idea was to strengthen the teacher education system both at pre-service and in-service level (NCERT, 2009).

The Plan of Action in the year 1992 had anticipated that those children who are capable of studying in any general schools should be transferred from special to regular schools. If the students are able to manage communication and basic academic and living skills should be taught in regular schools (Chandra, 2018).

Although none of these policies specifically addressed inclusion or Inclusive Education, the suggestions did place a significant amount of emphasis on laying the groundwork for Inclusive Education in India.

Later, in the year 1974 government of India, under ministry of welfare launched a scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). This scheme mainly aimed at integrating students with disability in the regular schools along with their peers. The idea was to better prepare children with disabilities for normal development and to give them the ability to confront the challenges of life with courage and self-assurance, the goal was to integrate those children into the general community at all levels as equal partners (NCERT, 2006). In the future, IEDC could not get much successful results and later it was combined with District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in the year 1994 and later with Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2000-2001 (Chandra, 2018).

Another important contribution in development of Inclusive Education in India is played by Rehabilitation Council of India act (1992). It is accountable for managing the policies and programmes related to disability in India. It is also in control for providing recognition to the institutions for providing degree in rehabilitation education.

From the legislative point of view Persons with Disability (equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation) (PWD) Act 1995 acted as major instrument. It had ensured participation and equality of persons with disabilities by reducing all kinds of discrimination. It had covered all the aspects such as education, employment, research and manpower development, positive action towards disability, social security for PWDs and their grievance-redressal services. Other than the previous commission this act had also identified seven types of disability such as-

- Blindness
- Low vision
- Leprosy cured
- Hearing impairment
- Loco motor impairment
- Mental retardation and mental illness
- Cerebral palsy

PWD Act (1995) had also defined disability with precise manner and the major terms related to disability. Regarding the education of persons with disability it had rightfully stated that education should be free for children with disability and it had to be provided in an integrated system of education. Development of assistive devices, developing teaching learning materials and selecting appropriate pedagogy for disabled students were also reinforced. Creation of barrier free and easily accessible atmosphere to study, reshuffle the curriculum according to needs of children with disabilities were also emphasised in this act. It had firmly stated that government should set up teacher training institutions so that the necessary human resources can be developed. Teacher training institutions should provide specializations in disability teaching so that trained manpower could be appointed in the special and regular schools.

With the start of 21<sup>st</sup> century government of India launched a programme called Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in the year 2001-2002 along with the state and local governing bodies. By the year 2010, the programme hoped to have provided an education that is both beneficial and pertinent to all students in the age range of six to fourteen. It was an initiative to universalize education and increase educational quality through planning that is both decentralised and context specific, as well as a method for implementation that is process oriented and time limited. SSA had adopted zero rejection policy to educate children with special needs (CWSN) students at secured elementary level. It had also mandated to provide education to CWSN in best suited environment as per their needs. Eradication of physical hindrances in the educational institutions was also promoted through SSA (MHRD, 2004). For students who could not visit schools physically provision of home based education had also been promoted under SSA.

At the level of elementary education, SSA places a strong emphasis on closing all gender and social category gaps in accordance with time-bound goals (MHRD, 2004). It also focuses on reducing the social category gap in the schools by promoting education of schedule castes (SC) and schedule tribes (ST) along with other backward communities. In all SSA strive for both physical and social inclusion in school at elementary level.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 had also accentuated that Inclusive Education should be available to all children irrespective of any discrimination. In this line, it had also proposed that curriculum should be developed keeping in mind the diversity of the classroom. The curriculum must enable the teachers to adopt appropriate child centered pedagogy with the help of suitable teaching learning materials. It further laid great emphasis on maintaining social inclusion in education by providing equality of educational opportunity to students coming from various marginalized groups, rural areas and female students. NCF 2005 had supported strengthening the teacher education programme and teacher education curriculum so that students with special needs along with other students can be benefitted. It promoted multilingualism in classroom and promoted democratic participation of children in school activities. NCF also reinforces the importance of special schools in educating children above 40% of disabilities and act as a support for Inclusive Education system.

In the year 2006 another policy on persons with disability came in i.e National Policy for Persons with Disabilities under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This policy had also stressed on physical, educational and economic rehabilitation of PWDs. Regarding education of persons with disabilities it had stated that a barrier free and accessible environment need to be created in all educational institutions, non-government organisations should be promoted and social security has to be ensured.

The Right to Education Act in the year 2009 had given a strong support to Inclusive Education by making education a fundamental right for all as stated in article 21 A of constitution of India. Under this act it had been firmly stated that it is the right of children to get free and compulsory education in the age group of 6-14 years. This act also propagated the idea of age appropriate admission for students who had never attended schools. Government acted as an anchor in ensuring education for all the children between 6-14 years of age. It had also resolutely stated that no child should be denied admission in schools, there is need to removal of corporal punishments from schools and creation of an inclusive environment in school for all the children. RTE Act in concert with SSA aimed at creating equitable and inclusive educational set-up in schools where enrollment, retention and quality education could be assured. This act protected several disadvantaged and weaker sections of society.

Another act passed by Indian government named as Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. This act had prominent importance in terms of Inclusive Education as it had tried to define disability in twenty one types including parkinson's disease, various blood disorders such as haemophilia, sickle cell disease and thalassemia and multiple disabilities along with acid attack victims. RPWD act had ensured that all these students should be given education in an Inclusive Educational environment by providing them adequate support. The government and local authorities were made accountable for creation of an Inclusive Educational environment. Accessible buildings, opportunity to take part in school activities, individualized support for academic and social development, monitoring the participation, progress and completion of education of CWSNs were also mentioned in this act.

Further, RPWD 2016 had also given due importance on teacher preparation for teaching children with special needs. It had laid great emphasis on building more teacher training institutions for preparing teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms. It had stressed on training teachers in Braille, sign languages and teaching students with intellectual disabilities. It had also focused on modifying the curriculum as per the needs of CWSNs and promotion of adult education. Providing financial assistance to students with benchmark disabilities was also suggested along with reservation in all government higher education institutions.

For implementing any changes and creating a shift in the education system the most catalyst is the teachers. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) had stated that educational scholars assert that teachers represent the most crucial component of the educational system. (NCTE, 2009). Therefore, to run a successful school system it is important to prepare more humane, sensitive and skilled, competent and motivated teachers. For preparing more skilled and humane teachers and developing the teacher education system in India, in the year 2009 National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) was revised. It aimed at preparing teachers for a child-centered academic environment. It aimed at preparing teachers in such a way that they could act as a facilitator for children in the classroom. They are required to help the child in knowledge construction and act as a co-constructor of knowledge (NCTE, 2009). This stipulates that the teachers would be prepared in such a way that they would be well known with the existing curriculum of schools, pedagogy to be

adopted, dealing with the community and participating in the school structure and management.

Regarding preparing teachers for elementary level it had pointed out that teacher training programmes should give more emphasis on preparing teachers for elementary level. Pointing out the concerns of teacher education system National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 had stated that there was a lack of theory-practicum relationship in the teacher education curriculum. It brought out the need of developing positive attitude among the teachers for various concerns as the attitude of teachers plays an important role in their academic deliberations. NCFTE 2009 very significantly mentioned that there is urgent need to rethink how the programme and courses are structured so that concept and practises of Inclusive Education could be incorporated in it. Acknowledging the social exclusion in the school system NCFTE 2009 had also raised concern on training teachers for bringing social inclusion in their classrooms by overcoming all the biasness towards children from disadvantaged and marginalised community, minority, girls and children with diverse needs. Preparing teachers for removing any form of social deprivation among students was prioritised. The teachers require training on how to include girls into the classroom discussion in a respectful manner and incorporate them. It is crucial that teachers who educate and manage the classroom should be made sensitive towards inclusion. Inclusive Education as defined by NCFTE 2009 is as *“a philosophical position as well as an arrangement of institutional facilities and processes”*. Therefore, it is imperative for educators to receive proper orientation regarding the diverse range of adaptations that educational institutions must undertake with respect to infrastructure, curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and other institutional practices to effectively cater to the learning requirements of all students.

### **1.7 Role of Elementary Teachers in Inclusive Education**

In the ancient times teaching position and the role of teachers in the society has been very scared and important. The ancient education system laid great amount of importance on the role of teachers in moulding the behaviour of students. Teachers were responsible for the wholesome development of the students. The *Gurukul* system of education also emphasised on the fact that teachers possess the ability to form the character of their wards. Traditionally, the person who takes care of young children

and moulds them into responsible adults naturally garnered a great deal of respect. It was the job of the educator to guide the learner through the tunnel of ignorance and into the bright light of understanding (Altekar, 1944). A teacher in the modern time as well acts a significant pillar of the education system. Although, the system of education had been shifted from teacher-centric to more democratic and student-centric, yet teachers as a facilitator gains equal importance and holds significant responsibility.

Teacher educators have to fulfil a variety of roles, including those of facilitator to student teachers, gatekeeper, and instructor of teachers. These responsibilities are in addition to their primary duties (Lunenberg, et.al. 2014). The adult teachers were under the duty of the teacher educators to have their pedagogical topic knowledge transferred to them (both at pre-service and in-service level).

Similarly, teacher educators are also responsible for regulating student teachers' engagement in self-directed learning and engaging in activities that build their viewpoint on a variety of classroom settings. During the process of preparing student teachers, the teacher educator acts as a guide for the student teachers in the following areas: orientation concerning classroom management; development of appropriate assessment techniques for classroom teaching; and adoption of pedagogical approaches to be adopted. Teacher educators should be able to model excellent teaching, explain their behaviour explicitly, and conceptually support their actions, in order to foster the emotional growth of student teachers (Lunenberg, et al. 2014).

### **1.8 Elementary Teachers Training Programme for Inclusive Education**

Inclusive Education as a structure is not only confined to the students, it involves other human resources such as teachers, parents and administrators as well (Angelides, 2008). Teachers were not appropriately prepared for teaching in an inclusive environment (Florian & Becirevic, 2011). Teachers in Inclusive Education system need to gauge the effectiveness of their teaching for the range of their students and should know what they need to do to enable each student to learn as much as possible (UNESCO, 2017). It is proved by the existing researches that the attitude of teachers and their perception towards Inclusive Education affects a lot on its implementation. The Elementary Teacher Education Programme should prepare



teachers who would be ready to accept and skilled enough to understand and work on the diversity and challenges it arises in the inclusive classroom (Florian & Rouse, 2009). Teacher trainings programmes need to develop and redesign so that it could build confidence and skills among pre-service and in-service teacher educators to address the transactional issues that might arise in an inclusive classroom. Teacher training programmes should consider reconstructing the curriculum along with adopting various teaching methods and strategies for teacher training purpose. These training programmes help to increase the knowledge of pre-service teachers on teaching in an inclusive classroom (Chhetri, 2019).

UNESCO (2013) highlighted that TEIs must ponder upon practicing learner-centered method in pre-service teacher education programmes so that these practices could get instil in the upcoming teachers which would act as a major strength in teaching children with diverse needs. Teaching in a group of diverse learners entails adaptation of innovative methods of teaching, using of individualized instruction and differentiated learning and making needful curricular changes (Elder, Damiani & Oswago, 2016). A diverse classroom also brings forth challenges to assess students' progress. Thus, providing training to student teachers about various assessment strategies also becomes an evitable part of preparation for IE. This training programme also encourages and motivates student teachers towards teaching students with diverse needs (Moriña & Carballo, 2017). The importance of teachers' attitude and their perception towards IE has already been discussed above. Teacher training programmes are in regulatory position where they can mould the attitude of the preparing teachers so that their behavior can be guided accordingly. Therefore, it is essential for teacher education programmes so redesign their courses accordingly.

There are various teacher training programmes in India for different level such as D.El.Ed programme for elementary teacher education, B.Ed., B.Ed. in special education, B.P.Ed. in physical education and integrated B.Ed. courses are the pre-service teacher education programme in India. Various in-service teacher education programmes are also available such as orientation programmes and workshops for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge.

The initial years of the life of a child are very crucial. Therefore, it is required to make the elementary school teachers efficient in dealing with children with diverse needs so that they can also get the basic education and can develop a strong

foundation of education for further level. The education of teachers is a crucial element in promoting advancement towards the establishment of inclusive schools (Julka, n.d). Considering recent advancements in the domains of school education and teacher education, the Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs (DEGSN) at the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has recognized the necessity of pinpointing the current deficiencies in teacher education curricula with regards to Inclusive Education. As such, the department has undertaken an initiative to formulate guidelines pertaining to extant inclusive teacher education practices. The significance of teacher education in promoting the development of Inclusive Schools cannot be overstated. It is imperative that teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate the implementation of diverse adjustments in school infrastructure, curriculum, teaching methodologies, and other related practices. This will enable them to effectively cater to the learning needs of all students (Bharati, 2016). NEP 2020 has also talked about sensitizing pre-service teachers for teaching students with disability and students from SEDGs as well (GoI, 2020).

In March 2022 National Council of Teacher Education had issued a guideline for incorporating inclusive regulations for Teacher Education Institutions in India. It has directed to include Inclusive Education approach in all the TEIs. Mainly the attempt is to increase the accessibility in the teacher education institutions. The guideline instructed on improving and modifying infrastructure, curriculum and universal design of learning at every TEIs.

### **1.9 Rationale of the Study**

There have been efforts all around the world for almost last three decades to make the education system Inclusive. There were various policies and programmes that have been formulated to provide education to children with special needs in the mainstream setup. All these initiatives aim to promote inclusion in education. Inclusive Education values and celebrates the diversity among students and recognizes their individual ability considering the issues of rendering human rights and equity among them (Hornby, 2014). Inclusive Education is not a policy it should be a practice, to develop every school into an inclusive one (Ainscow and Booth,

2002). One of the important components that contribute to IE is a trained teacher who is able to successfully cater to the diversified need of the classroom.

The training of educators needs to adapt to the shifting requirements of the educational system. To achieve this goal, teacher education programmes must train their students to be: a) active members of a group of people who make a mindful attempt for curricular renewal so that it is relevant to the needs of today's students; and b) hopeful, compassionate, and humanitarian facilitators in teaching-learning situations that allow learners (students) to discover their talents, realise their physical and intellectual potential to the fullest, and develop personality and enviable social and human values to act as conscientious citizens (NCERT, 2005).

It is recommended that teacher education programmes incorporate practical experiences for teachers to engage with children in authentic settings, rather than solely relying on theoretical instruction about child development. This should elucidate the psycho-social attributes and needs of learners, including their unique abilities and characteristics, as well as their preferred mode of cognition, motivation, and learning that may stem from their home and community socialization (NCTE, 2009). Thus it is very much important that the teacher education programme at elementary level must include the components of Inclusive Education in their training programme to empower the student teacher to develop his/her personality in such a way that it is able to cater the needs and demands of every student in the classroom (Lancaster & Bain, 2010; Sreeja, 2017; NCTE, 2009 & Julka, n. d.).

Establishment of District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) is one of the major steps to improve upon the quality of Elementary Teacher Education. DIET focuses on developing the competencies of the teachers in such a way that they become sensitive towards their profession and can understand the needs of the students of their classroom. DIETs have the responsibility to increase the capabilities of educators by way of the organisation of seminars and workshops on a variety of educational subjects for the purpose of professional development. It works as a nodal institute for pre-service and in-service Elementary Teacher Education Programme. At present, the biggest challenge in front of IE is that the teachers teaching in the schools lacks in knowledge or skills how to accommodate the children with diverse needs in the normal classroom, what teaching strategies would be best applicable for the children. However, in the teacher education programmes also Inclusive Education is

not kept at the center in most of the teachers training programmes it is taught merely as a paper in their course (Julka, 2004).

Most of the researches conducted last two/three decades have majorly focused on the Access, (Peter, 2004; Acedo, 2008; Miles, and Singal, 2010) status, (Rahman, 2011; Mawangi, & Orodho, 2014), attitude (Avramidis & Norwich 2002; Ozokcu, 2018) and teacher training (florian, & Linklater, 2010; Cameron, 2017). Studies conducted by (Kalita, 2013; Bhattacharya, 2020; Babla, 2017; Devi, 2019) majorly focused on status of IE, efficacy of pre-service teachers and on specific disability. The researcher could not locate any studies that were being conducted in Assam on the teacher training programme at primary level with relation to the efficacy of student teachers in conducting an inclusive classroom. There was a lacuna of a comprehensive study understanding the teacher education programme from an inclusive outlook. Most of the studies related to teacher training emphasized on secondary education only. It is essential to build an inclusive education system at the elementary level in order to strengthen the foundation of inclusive settings in our education system. Therefore, the present study intends to investigate the inclusion of Inclusive Education component in the D.El.Ed programme in terms of curriculum, infrastructural and human resources, and how the teachers are being prepared to work in an inclusive classroom, their perception and self-efficacy in dealing with the children in an inclusive setting and pedagogical processes adopted to teach in same classrooms.

### **1.10 Statement of the Problem**

The present study is entitled as “**Study of Inclusive Education in the Elementary Teacher Education Programme in Assam**”.

### **1.11 Significance of the Study**

Inclusion is regarded as process of change and adaptations. This change must be endured considering the students’ requirements. To be able to create such changes and modifications it is important to empower the teachers’ community through various processes. One of the significant ways is to induce Inclusive Education contents in the teacher training programmes at various stages.

Teacher education programmes in India have been given adequate importance by various policies and programmes. Recently, NEP 2020 has also laid major recommendations for improving the teacher education system in India. In the context of recent advancements in school education and teacher education, Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs (DEGSN), NCERT has also emphasized the needs to identify gaps in teacher education from the viewpoint of Inclusive Education.

Therefore, this study aspires to investigate various components of teacher education programme in order to understand and find out the amalgamation of Inclusive Education in the pre-service Elementary Teacher Education Programmes. This study has focused on understanding the construction of the curriculum from an Inclusive Education perspective, studying the infrastructural facilities in the TEIs, understanding the perception of the student teachers and teacher educators and their level of self-efficacy.

For the successful implementation of Inclusive Education at the elementary level and to achieve all the goals stated by the government for an inclusive system of education. It is imperative to train our prospective teachers and up-skill the teacher educators for inclusive teacher training. In this study perception of the teacher educators were also studied. As it has been found that the perception of the teacher educator influences the perception of the student teachers (Gupta & Tandon, 2018; Carroll, Forlin, & Jobling, 2003). Research conducted over the years have proved that teachers training and teachers perception plays a significant role in IE. Thus, this study becomes highly pertinent to understand the process. The results of the study would contribute to redesign and restructure the existing curriculum of elementary teacher education programme in Assam. Moreover, the findings of the study would also bring the focus on developing infrastructural facilities in DIETs of Assam. The NCTE guideline 2022 had also stressed on the developing an Inclusive Teacher Education Programme. Further, the findings would reveal about how the student teachers and the teacher educators perceive Inclusive Education as a fundamental component of the education system. It would also contribute to understand self-efficacy of both the groups.

Findings of this study would provide composite framework for the TEIs at elementary level to improve the existing Elementary Teacher Education Programme and contribute to prepare teacher more confident in managing an Inclusive classroom.

## 1.12 Operational Definitions

**Inclusive Education:** In this present study Inclusive Education means, a system of education that includes children from both physically and socially disadvantaged sections despite their differences, and provide opportunity of being part of the same classroom as other children of their age, and gives them the chance to be exposed to the same curriculum to their optimal potential.

**Elementary Teacher Education Programme:** In the present study Elementary Teacher Education Programme refers to the two-year Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) offered by DIET's in Assam.

**Perception:** In this study Perception refers to the concept and understanding of Inclusive Education among teacher educator and student teacher.

**Self-Efficacy:** In this study, Self-Efficacy refers to the ability of the teacher educator and student teacher to work in an Inclusive classroom.

**Gender:** In this study gender refers to only male and female student teachers and teachers-educators.

## 1.13 Research Questions

1. How the concept of Inclusion is reflected in the Curriculum in terms of the Theory, Practicum, and Internship of D.El.Ed Programme?
2. How far the Infrastructural and Human Resources of DIET's promote an Inclusive setup?
3. What is the Perception of Teacher Educator on Inclusive Education?
4. What is the level of Self-efficacy of Teacher Educator for preparing teachers for Inclusive classrooms?
5. What is the Perception of Student Teacher on Inclusive Education?
6. What is the level of Self-efficacy of Student Teacher for teaching in an Inclusive classroom?
7. What will be the Suggestive Framework for Integration of Inclusive Education in the D.El.Ed Programme?

## 1.14 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the Curriculum from the perspective of Inclusive Education in terms of-
  - a. Theory
  - b. Practicum
  - c. Internship

2. To study the Infrastructural and Human Resources for an Inclusive setup in the DIETs.
3. To study the Perception of Teacher Educator and Student Teacher towards Inclusive Education.
4. To study the level of Self-efficacy of Teacher Educator and Student Teacher for Inclusive Education.
5. To prepare a Suggestive Framework for Integration of Inclusive Education in the D.El.Ed programme.

### **1.15 Hypotheses**

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 1: *There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female teacher educators related to self-efficacy toward Inclusive Education.*

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 2: *There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female teacher educators related to efficacy in managing behavior*

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 3: *There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female teacher educators related to efficacy in collaboration.*

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 4: *There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female teacher educators related to efficacy in inclusive instruction*

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 5: *There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female student teachers related to self-efficacy toward Inclusive Education.*

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 6: *There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female student teacher related to efficacy in managing behaviour.*

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 7: *There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female student teacher related to efficacy in collaboration.*

Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 8: *There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female student teachers related to efficacy in inclusive instruction.*

### **1.16 Delimitations of the Study**

1. The present study was delimited to the DIETs of Assam only.
2. The study was delimited to the final year D.El.Ed student teachers.