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**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION? DISABILITY, CULTURE,  
TEACHING AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN  
LIBYA**

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**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
The degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Huddersfield**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Inclusive education is a recent phenomenon in the education system in Libya. It is about giving equal educational opportunities to all students, whether with disabilities or, not in the mainstream school or classroom. Schools are considered as social institutions that should endeavour to enhance all children's lives through appropriate teaching and learning practices. However, the school culture, which is generally defined as 'how things are done here' is vital for the promotion of inclusive education. The aim of this study were to explore teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya taking into account the findings of the General People's Committee of Education report (GPCE,2008). Teachers appeared to play a vital role in enhancing inclusive education through their practices.

In order to achieve this aim, the study includes a focused literature review of areas including inclusive education, disability and school culture. Given the nature of this research an interpretive epistemological position was adopted. This study adopts qualitative analysis to collect and analyse the data and present the findings. Content analysis was used for analysing qualitative data gathered via semi-structured interviews. A total of 36 interviews were conducted, with 12 teachers from special schools, 12 teachers from primary schools and 12 teachers from secondary schools.

Results from the qualitative data indicated that teachers support inclusive education, however, they had reservations on the inclusion of students with severe disabilities. Several factors were identified to influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The most common factors were the severity of disability that the students had, inadequate training of teachers on teaching students with disabilities, inadequate government funding, lack of specialised resource personnel, lack of appropriate equipment and resources to support students and teachers in the teaching and learning process. Limited commitment from the Ministry of Education and limited participation and consultation of teachers on policy and curriculum design were also identified as contributing factors for non-inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools.

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

**My beloved mother and father;** I have tried to achieve their dream to complete my study. They encourage me to be the best I can be, to have high expectations and to fight hard for what I believe. They have also provided me with the best opportunities in life.

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**My beautiful daughters;** the stars of my life. I do not forget them and thank my daughters for their patience during my study.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EFA	Education for All
GAIT	The General Authority for Information and Telecommunication
GPC	General People's Committee
GPCE	General People's Committee of Education
ICE	International Conference on Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
NTC	The National Transitional Council
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHO	The World Health Organisation

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

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## **1.0 Introduction.**

The inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools is part of a large worldwide human rights movement which calls for the full inclusion of all people with disabilities in all aspects of life (Tilstone, Florian & Rose, 1998). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1994) called on all governments to adopt inclusive education and enrol all students with disabilities in mainstream schools; which was agreed in the Salamanca Statements on Special Needs Education by 92 governments and 25 international organisations. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2007), people with disabilities must be included in all areas of life, the convention set out the general principles, which included non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity, and full effective participation by everyone.

Culture has been described as an intricate and illusive notion, social experience, subjective, dynamic and pluralistic; it is difficult to define and understand (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 2005). School culture is one of the most difficult concepts in education because at its heart is the deeper level of shared basic assumptions and beliefs that operate unconsciously (Schein, 1985).

One of the main objectives of inclusive education is to ensure that students with disabilities have fair and equal access to mainstream schools, and this depends on changes and amendments in schools and mainstream classrooms (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey 2005). According to Andrews and Clipart 1993), the objectives of inclusive education will not be achieved quickly and the process itself will take time to evolve and grow. They say that the commitment of all stakeholders in the educational process is a necessary and important

requirement for the emergence of a unified system of education that can meet the significant needs of all students (ibid).

There are many reasons to accept inclusive education. Studies show that inclusive education offers social development for all students and improves educational opportunities, responds to diversity, fosters understanding and tolerance and helps to eradicate prejudices against students with disabilities (Peters, 2003; Kugelmass, 2004).

Inclusive education improves employment and educational opportunities for students with disabilities (Peters, 2003). Research shows that children with disabilities in mainstream schools achieve great success at the level of academic and social education, in comparison with those children with disabilities in separate special education institutions (Rix & Simmons, 2005). Jenkinson (1997) agrees that the education of children with disabilities is easily accessible to the general curriculum and that the majority of children with disabilities do not achieve better progress in education when they are isolated.

According to Peters (2003), education in special schools results in their exclusion from opportunities for further expansion and progress in their education, and it also diminishes their access to vocational training and employment. He adds that the failure to access education and training prevents the achievement, economic and social independence of people with disabilities, which results in a continuous cycle of poverty and vulnerability in society (ibid).

Studies conducted by the National Research Centre on Learning Disabilities (2005), state that special education students educated in mainstream schools have higher academic success, higher self-esteem and a greater possibility of further education. They are also more likely to graduate and find employment when they leave school. Therefore, with inclusive education, the chance of students with disabilities, getting into employment is higher than those students who remain in self-contained special education classrooms.

Salamanca Framework (1994) asserts that educational systems that take into account the wide diversity of children's characteristics and needs are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, and creating welcoming communities, and that each child has the right to be a full member of his or her or school community. Andrews and Clipart (1993) say schools should give the opportunities for children to learn among their friends, and strive to develop communities that value diversity. It is important that quality implies that disabled children do not receive quality teaching and that no child should be disqualified from mainstream schools because of apparent differences in teaching (O'Hanlon, 2003). This means acceptance of all children and appreciation for the rights of children in education, regardless of differences among them. In the views of Kugelmass (2004) and Rix and Simmons (2005), inclusive education is increasingly being seen as a strategy for responding to diversity of students in schools at both national and international levels. According to Booth and Ainscow (1998), with the increasing diversity of children in schools around the world, old models of separating students by different categories and labels are seen as intimidating and domineering.

Understanding and tolerance are fostered amongst students in inclusive educational settings. According to the National Research Centre on Learning Disabilities (2005), by educating students with disabilities and students without disabilities together, inclusive education helps to foster understanding and tolerance, and it improves preparation of students of all abilities for purposes in the world away from school.

Inclusive education also helps to eliminate bigotry, the findings of Wade and Moore (1992) show that as more disabled children enter mainstream schools, more of the bigotry established in society will begin to disappear. They add that as students without disabilities and their parents interrelate on a day to day basis with children with disabilities, they will begin to understand the strengths and flaws of the students rather than their disabilities; they also say that the optimistic attitudes towards disabled students that are developed and established in many schools will permeate through families and society and change towards people with disabilities (ibid).

In the views of Jenkinson (1997), if students with disabilities are going to be segregated out of mainstream schools, they are going to be kept out of life forever. Jenkinson argues that mainstream schools give students with disabilities much more. Students with disabilities give them the community contact and a sense of how this world operates. Jenkinson also states that segregated settings are seen as artificial and non-normative because transfer of students with disabilities from such settings into a mainstream community setting will require considerable adjustment, that may not be necessary if the individual student had not been integrated within that community from the start.

## **1.1 Short Overview of the Researcher**

The researcher's first contact with Libyan Education dates back to 1997 when he worked as an auditor in Libyan management control. This experience helped him to identify many of the difficulties and challenges associated with the development of Education in Libya. Eleven years as an auditor in Libyan management control gave the researcher much useful experience and his knowledge was broadened through the performance evaluation and by carrying out reports relating to the education system.

One point to bear in mind, is that having been a government official, looking at education, this might have had an influence over how participants shared their world-views, and overall participation. Having said this, the researcher found the participants very supportive and willing to voluntarily share their life-experiences concerning inclusive education. This is evidenced by some of the quotes used in the discussion chapter, and how some participants were angry that the system had not really improved.

On the other hand, academic experience will widen the researcher's knowledge of the difficulties associated with gathering fieldwork data, in particular, through conducting interviews with various respondents. One simple reason for choosing this topic is the change in Libyan government policy towards introducing inclusive education into the education

system and the serious steps it has taken over the last few years to develop that inclusive education system.

## **1.2 Problems of the study**

The enrolment of students with disabilities in mainstream schools did not provide them with equal opportunities to learn with their mainstream peers and did not help them with social and academic growth (Angelides & Aravi, 2007). Educating students with special needs in the ordinary schools is a right guaranteed under special legislation for the disabled (Ibid). Local, regional and global legislation can ensure the development of teachers and the development of a positive attitude toward inclusive education.

Poverty and inequality in Libya are not widespread and has traditionally been a structural problem on a small scale. However, since the 2011 revolution poverty has risen. Though there are no official figures on poverty, it is not the case that significant parts of the population are fundamentally excluded from society due to poverty and inequality. The United Nations Development Programmes 2011 Human Development Index ranked Libya at position 64 out of 187 countries with a value of 0.758, hence placing it among the countries deemed to have a high level of educational development.

Destruction of schools, killing of teachers, changing of school curriculum overnight in line with western educational system (Amusan, 2013) and the need to replace unavailable teachers are some of the challenges of the civil war in Libya. The psychosocial effects of war on children, the stability of the state and the mistrust among the people merits further examination. Children left by fighters from both sides faced a series of challenges such as hunger and lack of care. Furthermore, burglary by boys as a means of livelihood adds to the challenge.

Another area of focus, of which many students of child soldiering have left untouched, is the question of the future development of the state. Recruitment and use of child soldiers indicate

that the generation that was supposed to ensure development is now lost through armed conflicts. The frustration-aggression dynamic may eventually lead to further terrorism (Sandole, 2010). The Internally displaced persons, including children and those that turned refugees may find it difficult to reintegrate into the society in the post-war state building. Children that were lucky not to be killed in the war are either permanently disabled or seriously injured (Shah, 2003).

In the opinion of McLeskey and Waldron (2000), when faced with students with a disability, teachers usually focus primarily on academic aspects and what the student cannot learn in school. They rarely turn to the study of emotional and social environment, including the views and attitudes towards these students. This is one of the critical factors impacting on the success of students with special needs or impairments.

The process of educating the students with disabilities rests with the teachers who offer the primary key to the success of education in the classroom, and the development outputs related to the education of students with disabilities. The attitude towards the education of these students plays a critical role, and is essential to the success of the integration programme and improving positive relations with individuals (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). Thus facilitating the possibility of students inclusion in school, in the community as a whole, and the success of educational change and development in general. However, the indicators in the educational field do not disclose an acceptable level of trends and perspectives amongst teachers working with these students; this is incompatible with the global direction advocating the rights of students with special education needs, including the disabled, to live within their community, and the calls to integrate them in mainstream schools and the community (ibid).

Based on the above, the problem of study is that there is no clear knowledge of the views of teachers towards inclusive education, despite the global trend and the ongoing quest to apply the process of inclusive education; the current study is aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions

and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya, and to consider the major problems with inclusive education.

### **1.3 Research Aim.**

The aim of the study is:

- 1- To explore teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya taking into account the findings of the General People's Committee of Education report (GPCE, 2008).

### **1.4 Research objective.**

- 1- To determine whether teachers understand the concept of inclusive education.
- 2- To establish underlying issues or factors that influence teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards inclusion.
- 3- To identify the factors affecting the practice of inclusive education in Libyan schools.
- 4- To evaluate to what extent do the identified school cultural features and practices impact on the teachers' approach towards inclusion.
- 5- To analyse the factual information on the curriculum used in Libyan schools.
- 6- To identify the school cultural features and practices that influence inclusive education in Libya.

### **1.5 Literature Review**

A literature review should be of direct relevance to the research problem. The focus of the literature review was provided in part by the identification of the research problem. It also

provided a focus for the main data collection phase and, in an important way, contributed to the data collection itself and the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, as is discussed later.

The review of the literature for this research study has a focus on five major sections: Firstly, setting the scene for inclusive education; secondly, perspectives on inclusion of students with disabilities; thirdly, disabilities. The fourth section is about school culture and inclusive education. The final section is about inclusive education and teaching.

## **1.6 Statement of Methodology**

Given the nature of this research, the interpretive epistemological position was adopted. This approach was chosen because the researcher's goal is centred on understanding, rather than on predicting, what the various participants in the research study believed, and how they felt and interpreted the events pertaining to inclusive education? Disability, culture, teaching and classroom management in Libya. Qualitative content analysis was adopted, including the 36 individual face-to-face interviews which were used to collect data from 12 teachers from three different special schools, 12 teachers from three different primary schools and 12 teachers from three different secondary schools. This sample (N = 36) is not representative of the overall population, but it is broad enough to give valuable insights into a range of perceptions. These groups of participants were chosen because of their central role in the Inclusive Education process.

## **1.7 The importance of research.**

The philosophies, principles, and practices associated with inclusive education in particular are quite new to teachers in Libya. This means that this study is one of the first pieces of research work ever done on inclusive education in Libya. For example, no such study has been undertaken, where Disability, culture, teaching, classroom management, and inclusive education in Libya to date. The study will contribute to the empirical evidence on the issues pertaining to inclusive education, disabilities, and the school culture, whereby teachers can

make informed decisions when including children with disabilities in the mainstream schools and classrooms. In addition, the study seeks to establish awareness about the inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream schooling and classrooms. Through awareness, teachers can endeavour to change their [teachers] attitudes, actions, and practices in the hope of giving educational opportunities to children with disabilities in the mainstream education system in Libya.

## **1.8 The Structure of the thesis.**

The research consists of six chapters:

Chapter one provides an introduction to the study and the research problem. This chapter presents the problem statement, with the objectives and significance of the study.

Chapter two offers a detailed description of the context of the study. A short overview of the Libyan context will be presented; the social environment in Libya, a brief history of Libyan education, objectives of education in Libya, the structure of the education system in Libya, compulsory education, curriculum aims of the schools in Libya, disabilities and school culture, in addition to the current vision of inclusive education in Libya.

Chapter three provides the related literature that was reviewed for this study. It includes a definition of inclusive education, the journey to inclusive education, principles of inclusive education, perspectives on inclusion of children with disabilities, school culture and inclusive education and inclusive education and teaching.

Chapter four presents the research methodology in detail, which describes the research philosophy, the research design and approaches. This section also discusses the research methods used in this study, and describes the process of qualitative content analysis. Trustworthiness is also addressed in this chapter.

Chapter five provides data analysis and findings of this research. The six major themes that emerged in the data analysis have been retained, together with other findings from the literature the major themes include; teachers' understanding of inclusive education concepts, teachers' perspectives on inclusion of students, barriers to inclusive education, school cultural features, inclusive education policies and inclusive education teaching.

Chapter six presents the limitations of the research, the potential avenues for future research and conclusion, and ends with the recommendations. This is where findings are concluded and where proposals are made for areas which require further research.

The next chapter presents a brief historical overview of Libya and its educational and cultural contexts, in the light of the theoretical framework of social constructivism, to cover teacher education, knowledge and development.

# CHAPTER TWO LIBYAN CONTEXT

---

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief historical overview of Libya and its educational and cultural contexts, within the theoretical framework of social constructivism, to cover teacher education, knowledge and development. First it presents brief information about Libya. It then outlines the significant educational structures, such as schools and universities, in terms of the differing knowledge and social situations of teachers and students, using various sources. In addition, it outlines the existing policies, the management approach and the educational changes and upheavals that have taken place in the country. Finally, it discusses the cultural context; the aim of this chapter is to build a clear picture of education in Libya,

## 2.1 LIBYA

Libya is an Arabic country located in the centre of North Africa, facing the Mediterranean Sea to the north with a coastline of close to 2000 kilometres (Almansory, 1995). It borders Egypt and Sudan to the east, Niger, Chad and Sudan to the south and Algeria and Tunisia to the west. Libya has an area of 1.8 million square kilometres (Ismae, Ismael, Abu Jaber, 1991; Almansory, 1995); it is the fourth largest African country and seventeenth largest country in the world (Ismae, Ismael, Abu Jaber, 1991). Vandewalle (2006) showed that the population of Libya is approximately 6.5 million and includes 1.7 million students, over 270,000 of whom study at higher education level (Hamdy, 2007), most live in the north of the state. Libya is a bilingual country, with the languages spoken being Arabic and Berber. People who speak Berber are a minority, living in the cities of Zuwara and Yefren (in the western mountains of Libya); they speak their language among themselves and pass it on to their children. Arabic is the only official language in Libya, and it is the language used in the educational system (ibid). Various dialects are spoken in different parts of Libya, so when students enter schools, Arabic-speaking children are exposed to a language which differs from their everyday dialect.

**Figure (2.1) Map of Libya**



Source: <http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/libya.html>

### 2.1.1 The social environment in Libya.

There was little unified organisational activity in Libya before the period of independence (Agnai, 1996). The main reason for this was that Libya was subjected to many foreign occupations: the Ottoman Empire's long occupation (1551-1911), and the Italian invasion of Libyan territory in 1911. In 1912, the Turkish signed the 'Ouchy' treaty with Italy, placing the Libyan people under harsh colonial rule (Ibid). They resisted the invading force, for more than twenty years (Department of Foreign Information, 1991).

At the end of 1943, the British entered Libya and established a military government in the country. Department of Foreign Information (1991) pointed out that the French then entered

the southern region of Libya in 1944 and established military rule (Ibid). In 1951, the independence of the country was acknowledged through the United Nations, and the Libyan government was established as a Kingdom (Ibid). Country Studies (1987) reported that in 1953, Libya formalised its relations with Britain under the Anglo-Libyan treaty of friendship and alliance. This agreement gave the British land and transport facilities for military purposes in exchange for aid (Ibid). Oil exploration in Libya began in 1955 and oil was first exported in 1961 (Ibid). The discovery of oil transformed Libya from a relatively poor country to one of the wealthiest (Ibid).

However, popular resentment grew as wealth was increasingly accumulated in the hands of the leaders (Smits; Janssen; Briscoe & Beswick, 2013). Ultimately, the bloodless Al-Fatah revolution, led by Colonel Muammar Al-Qaddafi on 1st September 1969, toppled the Kingdom and a revised constitution was established (Ibid). The Country Studies (1987) reported that the British and American military bases in Libya were closed in March and June of 1970, respectively. By 1971, libraries and cultural centres operated by foreign governments, including the British Council, were also ordered to be closed (Ibid). In 1973, Muammar Al-Qaddafi announced the start of a "cultural revolution" in educational institutions (Ibid). This happened when he supported terrorist groups and even sponsored terrorist actions in Europe, such as the Pan Am 103 and the West Berlin discotheque incidents (Ibid). Qaddafi and Libya were rejected internationally when the Soviet Union fell. After a decade of economic stagnation and international isolation, Al-Qaddafi began a programme of accord with the West, beginning in 2003 when he agreed to end Libya's nuclear weapons programme (Ibid). Since then, many Western leaders visited Libya to welcome Al-Qaddafi back into the West (Ibid).

In conjunction with the existing youth movements in the Middle East, known as "the Arab Spring", and after the deposition of the Tunisian and Egyptian Presidents, a frustration that had been building in Libya began to emerge; a group of young Libyans organized a Day of Rage in Benghazi in February 2011 (Smits et al., 2013). Their initial demands included economic and political reforms, such as the introduction of a constitution, though they did not seek the overthrow of the regime. Despite the peaceful character of these protests, the regime's security

services hit back hard, opening fire on the crowd (Ibid). Other spontaneous eruptions of public dissent soon appeared elsewhere, and were similarly suppressed, but the strategy no longer worked (ibid). Libyans were finally expressing their pent up anger and resentment against the regime, and especially the uneven distribution of power and wealth. The eastern province of Cyrenaica, which had suffered the most from Qaddafi's policies, was ready to burst (Ibid). It was also in the east that the opposition forces went on to establish a coordinating body, the National Transitional Council (NTC) (Ibid). The helm of the NTC was made up of technocrats and members of the regime who had defected, most of them from the military. Many of them had attempted, but failed to introduce reforms under the Qaddafi regime. The NTC swiftly declared its vision of a free, democratic and united Libya, and espoused the principles of political democracy. However, the real power-brokers during the revolution were the armed brigades, many of which were linked to a city or a region (Ibid). Supported in their struggle by the NATO military intervention that was based on the controversial Security Council Resolution 1973, the brigades could unleash an all-out military campaign against regime strongholds (such as BaniWalid and Sirte) to Tripoli fell to the rebels in August 2011 (ibid). Members of the armed brigades eventually executed Qaddafi on 20 October 2011 in the battle of Sirte, the deposed ruler's last stronghold (ibid).

### **2.1.2 Economic challenges.**

Libya was classified as a poor country before the oil has been discovered in this country in 1962 to become the second biggest oil producer in the African continent, after Nigeria, and by the end of that decade the Libyan total revenues has turned to depend completely on oil (Al-Fathly & Ibrahim, 1997; Al- Jhemy, 1992). However, the country's economy has been influenced negatively between 1992 and 1999 due to the extensive economic sanctions against Libya following to the bombing of an American plane in 1988 which Libya was accused of planning. This negative influence has also significantly affected the Libyan education sector (including higher education and educational planning.) negatively (GAIT, 2003).

It has been suggested that the economic sanctions result in major restrictions on Libyan citizens travelling abroad for learning and on professionals from abroad coming to the country for technical consultations (GAIT, 2003). This restriction was also influence the ability of the country to get equipment and modern technology from abroad (Ibid). One year later (2002),

there was a dramatic increase in the GDP of the country due to the corresponding rise in the prices of oil and gas leading to knock-on' effect on the act of all economic sectors (Ibid). Moreover, in the same year the government in Libya agreed to halt the country's nuclear programme, which made it clear for Libya to start large scale development programmes with the aim of expanding the economy and reduce the country's reliance on oil (Ibid).

Out of 169 countries, Libya took 64<sup>th</sup> place in the 2010 United Nations' Development Programme Human Development Index, with an average GDP of US\$10,500 (UNDP Report, 2010). Accordingly, many improvements were established to the housing projects, health care system, education and higher education sector on a large scale were performed (Ibid).

The country was always responsible for the financing of education and since 1969, students enrolled in the public universities in Libya receive their tuition fees for their education as well as for free room and board from the government (GAIT, 2003). This situation remain unchanged till the end of the 1980s, when the budgets for Higher Education increased to such a degree that the government no longer afford to remain the main financier of education. Information from the official statistics indicated that during the last 30 years, education expenditure was on an average of 6.3% of the GDP, while university enrolled students in education amounted to 4.92% of the whole population in 2000 (Ibid).

The main financier of education in Libya is the government with contributions from private citizens, non-governmental organisations, in addition to assistance and loans from private institutions. Both graduate and postgraduate students in the sector of Higher Education only pay a small amount of money as registration and tuition fees at the start of each semester or academic year (Aгнаia, 1997). All children between 6 and 15 years old were offered free compulsory education and this result in a dramatic increase in the literacy rate (Ibid).

Many statistics indicate that there was a rising trend in general education spending within the first 14 years after 1969; the spending doubled more than 16 times due to the widespread plans that were utilized during this period (GAIT, 2003). There were large year-to-year fluctuations in the spending volume between 1983 and 1993. This was associated with a severe decrease in the spending on education seen till reached 17.8 million LD in 1993.

A significant progress in spending on education was noticed in the period 2003-2007 to reach 1.196.3 million LD in 2007 which represent highest level since 1970 (UNDP Report, 2010). In order to develop its human resources, the Libyan government gave special importance to the Higher Education sector. The GPC statistic suggested that the cost per student in 1971 was 160.3 LD when there were only four universities that had been recognised. This rate has increased gradually to become 1,509 LD in 2007 reflecting the great efforts made by policy makers over the last few decades and the developments which have been established in Higher Education since the revolution of September 1969 (GPCE, 2008).

The great expansion of the university sector represents the most important of these developments as the number of universities rose from only two in 1966-1967 to 27 universities in 2007 (GPCE, 2008). Since the quantitative expansion of education was accomplished in the mid-1990s, the government has started focusing to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the quality of education and university management (Ibid). In spite of this action, the solid public support for Higher Education can no longer be continued because of the rapid increase in the number of students and the increasing for Higher Education social demand (Ibid).

## **2.2 Brief History of Education in Libya.**

Looking in detail the different stages of education development in Libya, from the early Ottoman era, when education received very little attention and only focus was on religious matters rather than modern education (Yousif, Goujon, & Lutz, 1996). During the late Ottoman era, the authorities made some disorganised efforts to keep religious education going through small mosques (Zawiya), which were widely spread all over the country (Ibid). Italians during their occupation undermined the previously widespread mosque education and introduced a

new system of education promoting Italian language and culture. Moreover, during World War II, all schools were closed as Libya became a major battleground in the North African region (Ibid).

The post-World War II era witnessed the British rule that succeeded Italians (Ibid). They managed to open schools which had been closed during the war (Ibid). The British worked hard towards promoting education among the people and towards improving the system of education (Toruneav, 1952). It was the British who introduced vocational training in Libya for the first time. People in Libya started to realize that education was the only way to achieve economic and social progress (ibid). Yet, prior to independence in 1951, education was inadequate in terms of content and form, as the level of illiteracy in the country reached 95 per cent, exacerbated by poor economic resources and deteriorating living standards. In other words, Libya was the breeding ground for illiteracy, disease and poverty where education was not of much significance (Yousif, Goujon, & Lutz, 1996).

But amazingly, five years after independence, government introduced free and compulsory education for the first time and universities were established in major cities such as Tripoli and Benghazi, and the country witnessed a huge boost with regard to education and modernisation, assisted by the unprecedented oil boom (ibid). Libya witnessed a remarkable development in all levels as a result of accelerated education (ibid). Schools can be found everywhere in cities, towns and villages across the country, including female education at all levels (ibid).

### **2.2.1 Libyan Education during the Turkish Rule (1520-1911).**

Reports on the development of education during the pre-independence period indicated that Ottomans were least concerned about education. For example, Fergiani (1983, p. 95) states that "...under the Turkish, education received little official support". Likewise, Habib, (1975, p. 280) points out that "...on the whole, the Turks neglected education." Habib (1975, p. 280) also points out that "...the history of education is closely tied to the last 400 years of colonial rule". He even concluded that the Muslim conquest in 643 AD presented early education

limiting to religious and mosque-centred schools (Habib, 1975). So, education during the Ottoman era could be described as private, religious education.

The economic hardships reflected in treating education as of less importance in Libyan community (El-Fathaly, 1986; Attir, 1980). Although there were private schools in main cities, due to the lack of transport they remained inaccessible to the majority of people (ibid). The main purpose of these religious schools was to graduate teachers of the Arabic language and religious subjects, or sharia judges to work in very remote areas (ibid).

### **2.2.2 Education during the Italian occupation (1911-1943).**

Until the Italian invasion, religious education was the main type of education available. In this regard, Deeb & Deeb, (1982) would argue that the Italian colonial period saw a new era in the development of education in Libya. From 1911, the Italians were determined to “Italianise” the educational system and wipe out the Arab influence from Libya. Towards reaching that goal, in 1914 they established the first Italian-Arabic school where all subject Arabic were taught in Italian. Then, by 1915, all mosque schools were subject to inspection and censorship by the Italian authorities. All (Zawiyas) were closed down and their assets confiscated (Habib, 1975).

In addition to all this, Italian administration invested more in education establishing some primary, secondary and vocational schools in Libya (Habib, 1975, p. 96). Not many Libyan parents sent their children to Italian schools though the Italians made improvements to the educational system (ibid). Then between 1940 and 1945 during World War II, virtually all schools in the country were closed down (Deeb & Deeb, 1982, p. 26).

### **2.2.3 Education during the British administration (1943-1951).**

Limited in form and content, education in pre-independent Libya, was accessible to only a small number people as the educational facilities were closely linked with mosques and the

education was predominantly religious (Attir, 1980). Hence very few educated people existed and illiteracy was prevalent, affecting 90 per cent of the total population of Libya (ibid). It resulted in an awful situation that there was no secondary schools for girls and no female primary teachers were trained (ibid).

At the time of Libya's independence in 1951, there were hardly 20 university graduates in the whole country and consequently there was a severe shortage of qualified people required to fill the administrative and executive positions that were once filled by the British (Habib, 1975). So, to accelerate the education, the 1951 constitution and the education ordinance of 1952 initialized the right to education, by making primary education compulsory for children (Ibid). To boost education in Libya the government plans and the five-year plans treated education with due importance and huge budgets were allocated (Attir, 1980. p.278; Habib, 1975. p.281). People accepted modern education as the only way out of the economic crisis (Habib, 1975). For this reason, their zeal for education boosted education, particularly male education, culminating in the establishment of the first university in 1955 (Ibid).

As a matter of fact, the discovery of oil in the early 1960s had caused fundamental changes in the economy in favour of educational planning (Ibid). Sprouting in the economy, the government established many schools even in rural areas to accommodate every child in the country. Several university colleges as well as vocational schools and training centres newly launched to bring up a new face to the country (Ibid). Also, in the aftermath of the discovery of oil, equal importance was given to female education as male and the country witnessed a rigorous diversified education (ibid). Those who had received a modern education became increasingly involved in the decision-making process at the social level, which further enhanced their position in society (ibid).

On independence in 1951, a UNESCO Commission came to Libya to investigate and make recommendations about education (Toruneav, 1952). They stated that there were only 29 primary schools in the capital city of Libya (Tripoli) and only one in the other major city

(Zawia). There was one teacher training centre for women in Tripoli (ibid). The primary school system in Tripoli was based on the Egyptian syllabus, and the upper primary school system followed the Italian school curriculum (Yousif, Goujon, & Lutz, 1996). Education was given no priority whatsoever under these periods of occupation (ibid).

During the period of monarchy, all Libyans were guaranteed the right to education at school at all levels, but education was not compulsory (Yousif et al., 1996). In September 1969, a major revolution altered the situation quite dramatically (ibid). This revolution offered many positive steps for Libya, and education began to grow at an enormous rate, alongside huge economic, political, and social changes in the country (see table 2.1).

**Table (2.1) summary of the Growth of the Libyan Education**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Literacy</b>
<b>1951</b>	<b>34000</b>	<b>Population literacy 20%</b>
<b>1962</b>	<b>150000</b>	<b>Female literacy 6%</b>
<b>1969</b>	<b>360000</b>	<b>Not found</b>
<b>1977</b>	<b>980000</b>	<b>Overall literacy 51%, female 31%</b>
<b>1986</b>	<b>1245000</b>	<b>Literacy: 54% male, 46% female</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>1477000</b>	<b>Literacy: 92% male, 72% female</b>

**(Adapted from Rajab, 2007, p76)**

#### **2.2.4 Education after 1970.**

Believing in the philosophy of modern education as the only way out of the state of economic underdevelopment, Libyan society achieved considerable progress towards modernisation, supported by the revolution and commitment of education (Attir, 1980). During the last 40 years, since 1970, education has become an attainable height because of the easy access to schools even in rural areas of the country (ibid). Increasing number university graduates in the country clearly indicated that there is remarkable progress in education that has been achieved

so far, as this number had already exceeded 10,000 graduates in the late 1970s, as compared to only 14 or fewer in 1950 (ibid).

For a better achievement of Libyan educational plans and long-term requirements to be effectively met with, some guidelines are presented. (Deeb & Deeb, 1982). First educational planning should focus on vocational and technical education to provide learners with necessary technical skills. Second, higher education should focus on applied sciences that would help the development of the Libyan economy. Third, the age of compulsory education should be raised from six to nine years, to provide the opportunity for the maximum number of children possible to join schools. Fourth, the fair geographical distribution of schools and other educational institutions are designed to cover the whole country. Fifth, the new educational plan should give more attention to adult and further education (Deeb & Deeb, 1982). The above mentioned guidelines assisted planners with more scope and intention to develop the educational system even higher. For example, by the early 1970s, significant changes had been introduced to the system at all levels (Deeb & Deeb, 1982).

Khalifa (2002) pointed out that under the Constitution of 1969 (amended 2 March 1977), Libyans are guaranteed the right to education. Primary and high schools were established across the country, and old Quranic schools that had been closed during the struggle of independence were reactivated and new ones established, lending a heavy religious perspective to Libyan education (ibid). The educational programme suffered from a limited curriculum, a lack of qualified teachers and a marked tendency to learn by rote rather than by reasoning (ibid). Libya's population of approximately 6.5 million now includes 1.7 million students (Khalifa, 2002, p.79). Yousif et al. (1996) stated that during the period 1973 to 1985 alone, "...the size of the school and universities population doubled, females in the student population increasing by 130 percent, compared with 80 percent for males" (p.82).The following table (Table 2.2) gives more detail about the number of students and schools in Libya according to the 2007 statistics.

**Table (2.2) number of schools and students in Libya in 2007**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Public schools</b>	<b>4000</b>
<b>Special schools</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Primary school students</b>	<b>838,395</b>
<b>High school students</b>	<b>273,391</b>
<b>Special school students</b>	<b>3032</b>

(Adapted from Hamdy, 2007)

Sawani (2009) argued that the rising number of students and schools has not been accompanied by an advance in the preparation of teachers, which would help teachers to deal with this developing number of students and schools (p.59).

### **2.3 Objectives of Education in Libya.**

There is an increasing desire to incorporate humanistic and democratic ideas into education in Libya. This interest has been recently emphasised in the general objectives of education in Libya which have been outlined in the National Report of the General People's Committee of Education (GPCE) about the development of education in Libya (GPCE, 2008). The GPCE, the equivalent of the Ministry of Education, is the governmental body responsible for education management in Libya (GPCE, 2008). This report was submitted for session 48 of the International Conference on Education in Geneva (25-28 November 2008). The objectives which indicate this orientation are presented below in the same order as in the report:

“...Objective 6: Enable students to acquire the appropriate knowledge of skills and positive attitudes; and cultural and social values appropriate to the needs of the student, and the needs and aspirations of the society.

Objective 8: Provide educational opportunities for all and assist students to choose the specialisation, which is in conformity with their orientation and abilities, and meets the needs of the society to achieve sustainable human development.

Objective 9: Provide and support new types of education and enable students to discover their abilities and acquire knowledge through self-learning.

Objective 10: Enable students to acquire the skills and scientific analysis to keep pace with scientific and technical developments in the contemporary world.

Objective 11: Help students to achieve growth in their physical and mental, psychological, emotional and social development.

Objective 14: Develop students' capacity to interact with other cultures and open up to the world, qualifying them as citizens able to live positively and jointly in the global community.

Objective 15: Develop the partnership of innovation and creation and enable students to access diverse sources of knowledge.

Objective 17: Enable students with special needs (gifted or disabled) to enjoy educational opportunities appropriate to their abilities and needs.

Objective 18: The development of the students' environmental awareness and motivate them to maintain the integrity of the environment and its various resources and make a positive contribution to solving environmental problems (GPCE, 2008, p 4-5)."

These objectives seem to be aligned with the democratic ideas of John Dewey (1859- 1952) and the humanistic ideas of Carl Rogers (1902-1987) about education. They also imply most of the Learner-centred Psychological Principles which were developed by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1993(GPCE, 2008).

## 2.4 Structure of Education System in Libya.

Libyan education is separated into two main structures: the school system and the university system. El-Hawat (2006) states that there are six years of primary school in Libya, followed by three years of high school and three years of secondary school. The following table (2.3) shows the stages of education in Libya by stage, years, ages and period.

**Table (2.3) Stages of Education in Libya**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Period</b>
<b>Primary</b>	<b>1-6</b>	<b>6-12</b>	<b>6 Years</b>
<b>High</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>12-15</b>	<b>3 Years</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	<b>10-13</b>	<b>15-18</b>	<b>3 Years (used to be 4 )</b>
<b>University</b>	<b>13-17</b>	<b>18-22</b>	<b>4 Years</b>

(Adapted from Rajab, 2007, p77)

## 2.5 Compulsory Education.

This stage of education is compulsory; pupils must obtain a certificate allowing them to enter high school (Rajab, 2007). This stage includes 9 years of education, usually from 6 and 15 years old, with two levels: primary and high (ibid). Primary school starts from the age of 6 years, until pupils move to high level at 12 years old, where they have 3 years of study to finish compulsory schooling (ibid). This level ends with a national examination, which is considered by the pupils to be a new and frightening experience (ibid). This examination is organised at county level and all pupils within the county are examined simultaneously (ibid). The curriculum, in terms of subjects to be studied, is shown in table (2.4)

**Table (2.4) the Curriculum (Schools in Libya)**

Schools	Primary School		Junior High School Level
Grades	1st-3th	4th--6th	7th-9th
	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
	Religion	Religion	Religion
	Physical Ed	Physical Ed	Physical Ed
	Painting	Painting	Painting
		Culture	Culture
		History	History
		Geography	Geography
		Science	English
			Biology
			Chemistry
		Physics	

### 2.5.1 Elementary Education.

The framers of the Constitution of Libya wouldn't believe the fact that one Libyan in ten never attended schools (Rajab, 2007). In order to achieve the national goal of educational facilities, the Constitution and Articles 28, 29 and 30 introduced the idea of universal, free and compulsory education on primary level for all the people in Libya (ibid). Libyan authorities pointed out that they had progressed two-thirds of the way towards the constitutional aim of instruction for every child (ibid). They assumed that qualitative approach is more important than the quantitative emphasis (Ministry of Education, 1970b). The education of the young

became, therefore, a primary concern of the society, and should be founded on sound principles (ibid). Because it is only through education, no matter formal or informal, that an average citizen can handle the problems of his basic needs and real life situations (ibid). In theory, primary education is compulsory in areas where adequate facilities were available, but in practice, this is more of a hope than reality because social and economic conditions, together with inadequate planning, particularly in the rural areas, have made the ruling ineffective (ibid). The course of study at primary level is designed to be universal throughout Libya to accommodate all children from urban and rural areas sharing the same basic curriculum (ibid).

The aims of primary education in Libya are inseparable from the general aims of education in the whole country. To define the main trends and aims of educational services, a significant Ordinance was issued on 28th September 1965 (ibid). These trends and aims were as follows:

- “...1) - More attention to be paid to the quality of education at all levels by extending the responsibilities of the Ministry to effect education in all its perspectives;
- 2) - Linking the quantity with the quality of education by an overall planning and by deciding what means would be the best to spread education throughout the country;
- 3) - Deciding the importance of appraisal of educational operations on the basis of statistics study and research;
- 4)- Directing the educational operations by means of developing the school curricula, the choice of textbooks and modern educational aids, with the view of bringing up a well-built generation, morally, mentally as well as physically;
- 5) - Supporting all levels of education to ensure equal opportunities to all on the largest possible scale and raising the standard of education at all levels;
- 6) - Ensuring all possible opportunities to all citizens according to their aptitude in the fields of education whilst considering the requirements of each environment;
- 7) - Developing and confirming the relation between educational society by linking the school and the social environment by school communities, parents associations and other bodies;
- 8) - Taking special care in training teachers for all levels of education, defining their levels and working for their reaching these levels and above” (Ministry of Education,1966 h.p3,4).

The curriculum of the primary school consisted of Arabic reading and writing, arithmetic, drawing, religion and sports during the first three years (Ministry of Education, 1968b). During the fourth, fifth and sixth years, the foregoing were continued, with the addition of history,

geography, culture and science (ibid). English was formerly taught in the upper elementary grades but in 1985 was discontinued.

It is time to revise the system of following the same curriculum for all primary schools in both rural and urban areas (ibid). The primary school can do much to stimulate an interest in agriculture and to encourage a proper appreciation of the advantages of rural life, and this is particularly important in Libya because of the absence of the tradition of settled agriculture and the consequent shortage of elementary skills which in other countries could be taken for granted (ibid).

Considering that there has been huge progress in building new schools, there is still much to be brought in facilities and infrastructure. For example, an investigatory team after studying what were supposed to be the best ten schools in Tripoli, summarised its findings as follows:

- “...1) - over-crowded classrooms;
- 2) -Limited library facilities;
- 3) -Inadequate and poor furnishings in classrooms;
- 4) -Limited recreation areas, lack of play equipment;
- 5) -Almost complete lack of maintenance;
- 6) -Environmental health hazards (lavatories, feeding rooms and electrical fixtures);
- 7) -Non-existence of fire prevention or suppression equipment;
- 8) -Poor lighting in classrooms;
- 9) -Non-existence of locker facilities, either for students or for staff;
- 10) -lack of ever limited administrative offices” (Ministry of Planning & Development, 1968, p55).

Equipment and models are essential for effective teaching but many of the Libyan schools are having insufficient teaching aids. Overcrowded and unmanageable classes in many city schools were unfavourable for better teaching. School textbooks presented a special problem for Libya because there were then no Libyan authors capable of writing the books. Therefore Libya had to depend entirely on other Arab authors. Unfortunately, these books tended to ignore the

pupils' local interest, and failed to reflect sufficiently the country's particular cultural background. A UNESCO report of 1952 made the following comment:

“...The foreign textbooks now used, whatever their intrinsic merit, are not adapted to the country. It is essential; therefore, to prepare and publish, with the least possible delay, Libyan textbooks which use the best tested teaching methods and at the same time take into account actual conditions in the country” (UNESCO,1952,p.44).

Libya has not come up with a complete solution for UNESCO's opinion even after 62 years. Both from the quantitative and qualitative points of view, the problem of textbook remains to be a major one, since Libya has adopted a policy of universal, free and compulsory primary education. The normal procedure is that the Ministry of Education prescribes one textbook for each subject to be used by each grade, and this is applicable to all public primary schools all over the country. Teachers have to depend on textbooks completely (UNESCO, 1952).

### **2.5.2 Preparatory Education (Junior High School Level).**

Under the twelve year school system, the six years at primary school are followed by three years at preparatory school (Ministry of Education, 1974). Enrolment in preparatory school requires that the student should be moving from elementary school and not to be more than sixteen years of age (ibid). Preparatory school followed basically a continuation of the curriculum from the primary school, even to the extent of adherence to a single textbook (ibid). This is true in most of the Arab education systems; where both teachers and students had to follow the uniform textbooks (ibid). Despite the fact that a strong body of educational opinion has increasingly stressed the value of activity and freedom, the traditional system in Libya remained more and more book-centred. Individual differences are an important aspect in a child's development, and these should be served by the provision of a variety of materials, including textbooks. Enriching the programme of the preparatory schools was of great importance. The Government's policy on independence was to provide chances for preparatory schooling for all Libyans who finished their primary education (ibid). Being unable to recover from the financial insecurities during the early years of independence, Libya could not achieve this goal (ibid).

## **2.6 Curriculum Aims of the Schools.**

In Libya, the government provides policy statements detailing the aims of the school. The curriculum must cover all the activities in a school, designed to promote the moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of students, and must prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and society (Libyan Education Authority, 1995). The following is an extract from the curriculum policy statement aims prepared by the Libyan Education Authority (1995, pp.110-111), translated into English:

- Build knowledge and skills which enable children to understand a wide range of concepts and apply this understanding in appropriate ways;
- Ensure that appropriate provision is made for all children to achieve their full potential;
- Develop positive attitudes to learning in an environment which will preserve self-esteem and confidence;
- Develop as wide a variety as possible all curriculum skills and knowledge necessary for everyday life;
- Develop a positive attitude to physical activity through participation in activities which promote confidence and self-esteem;
- Work in partnership with parents and the community enabling children to gain maximum benefit in their environment (Libyan Education Authority, 1995, p, 110-111).

However, while educational improvement is still a priority for the government, educational programmes suffer from limited curricula, lack of qualified teachers (particularly Libyan teachers), and a strong tendency to learn by rote rather than by reasoning, which is a characteristic of Arab education. Nonetheless, education is free at all levels.

## **2.7 Persons with disabilities.**

People in some Arab countries kept the disabled members of their family away from the community and assisted them with care and protection (Turmusani, 2003; Chatty & Rabo, 1997). It was a misconception among the people in the Arab world that the people with disabilities were a curse and burden to the society (ibid). The problem was worse for disabled females who were often killed as soon as they were born (ibid). The sprouting of Islam in 7th century brought forth a radical change (ibid). The Islamic faith called for equality for all,

regardless of the gender, ethnicity or ability of the individual (ibid). People with disabilities inspired to obtain rights and responsibilities in Muslim society and at the beginning of Islam, there were many examples of people with disabilities in important positions such as soldiers, scholars or holy men who called Muslims to prayer (Mu'dhen) (ibid). Recent studies reported that there was an increasingly positive attitude towards people with disabilities especially toward people with visual and/or hearing impairment comparing to mental disabilities. Muslim women maintained better understanding and attitudes towards people with disability compared to Muslim men (Turmusani, 2003), and professionals who deal with people with disability have more positive attitudes as well (Al-Abdulwahab & Al-Gain, 2003). The famous Arab writer and poet named AL-Jahed, whose name means "goggle eyed", in his book "Kitab Al-Bursan" asked for the inclusion of people with disabilities (EL-Hessen, 2006). Meanwhile, AL-Jahed (1981) rules out the misconception that disability prevents you from work and normal life and adds that many famous people in Arab history had disabilities. In the Arab world there always remained a distinction between physical and learning disabilities. Some important families announced that they had members of their families who had physical disabilities and many of these obtained high positions, whereas people with learning disabilities were never mentioned as part of the family; even their full names were not mentioned (Turmusani, 2003; Chatty & Rabo, 1997). There prevailed an unfair treatment to women with physical disability but men were provided with care and support (ibid).

Libya has achieved tangible progress in terms of care for persons with disabilities aimed at developing their capabilities and in terms of its concern for, and commitment to, legislation and policies that safeguard the right of persons with disabilities to a decent life (say Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN, 2005). It has done this by expanding and developing the number of education, health and social services so that these persons can become self-reliant, join in working and integrating into society (ibid). Libya has also directed its attention to prioritizing the rights, needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities, issuing a decision in 1970 to form a committee tasked with studying the affairs of persons with disabilities, and proposing ways and means of ensuring their care (UN, 2005).

Libya proposed to the international community that the theme of the International Year for Disabled Persons should be full equality (UN, 2005). On 16 December 1976, the General

Assembly of the United Nations accordingly adopted its resolution 31/123 proclaiming the year 1981 International Year for Disabled Persons (UN, 2005). In 1979, the National Committee for the Care of Disabled Persons was established and, in order to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities, the Disabled Persons Act No. 3 of 1981 was promulgated, followed by the Disabled Persons Act No. 5 of 1987(UN, 2005).

In accordance with these laws, a number of regulations, decisions, work directives, circulars and regulations concerning the implementation, amendment and addition of certain articles relating to the benefits established for disabled persons were issued: (UN, 2005, p.29).

- "...The General People's Committee (GPC) Decision No. 41 of 1990 issued regulations governing some of the benefits established for disabled persons.
- The (GPC) Decision No. 207 of 2006 added speech and hearing-impaired persons under 18 years of age to the groups provided for in the General People's Committee Decision No. 92 of 1995, in accordance with Act No. 16 of 1985.
- The (GPC) Circular No. 22 of 2006 concerned implementation of procedures for application of the provisions of the Disabled Persons Act No. 5 of 1987 and the regulations issued pursuant thereto.
- The (GPC) Decision No. 281 of 2006 approving the issuance of regulations governing some of the benefits established for disabled persons (education for disabled persons/training and rehabilitation/suitable employment for qualified or rehabilitated persons)
- The (GPC) Decision No. 26 of 2005 adding the speech- and hearing-impaired to the categories enjoying the benefit of reduced fares on public transport.
- The (GPC) Circular No. 3035 of 2008 concerning the allocation of 5 per cent of qualified personnel to persons with disabilities.

- The (GPC) Decision No. 664 of 2008 fixing the remuneration for home help services provided to disabled persons.
- The (GPC) Decision No. 665 of 2008 placing the education of persons with disabilities within the purview of the General People's Committee for Education.
- The (GPC) Decision No. 666 of 2008 establishing a National Council for the Care of Persons with Disabilities; and (GPC) Decision No. 667 of 2008 adding certain categories of disabled persons under 18 years of age to those specified under article 12 of the Basic Allowances Act No. 16 of 1985" (UN, 2005, p.29).

In conjunction with the above laws and decisions, a department was established (within the structure of the Ministry of Education authority), to deal with the affairs of persons with disabilities. Its role is to attend to disability issues and the welfare of persons with disabilities and to oversee the centres and schools for such persons.

### **2.7.1 Background of child disabilities.**

The total number of disabled persons in Libya who are registered with the General Social Solidarity Fund Authority amounted to 73,892, according to statistics for 2008 (National Centre for the Prevention, 2008). According to these same statistics, the total number of disabled children registered with the General Social Solidarity Fund Authority, amounted to 13,145 representing 17.7% of the total number of disabled persons, with 58% of them males and 42% of them females (ibid). Of these 46.2% suffer from various types of developmental delay, 38.16% suffer from a physical or motor disability, 10.2% suffer from a hearing impairment and 6.4% from a visual impairment (ibid).

### **2.7.2 Schools for disabilities.**

The number of institutions working in the field of special education throughout Libya amounts to 59 schools specializing in the care, rehabilitation and education of people with specific types of disability, under supervision from the disabled affairs department of the Ministry of

Education (UN, 2005).The following table (table 2.5) gives more details about the number of schools.

**Table (2.5) number of special schools**

No	Authority branch	Number of schools
1	Tripoli	6
2	Misratah	5
3	Al-Marqab	4
4	Al-Jufrah	1
5	Sahl al-Jifarah	4
6	Al-Jabal al-Gharbi	3
7	Al-Nuqat al-Khams	3
8	Sawf al-Jin	3
9	Al-Zawiyah	3
10	Al-Wahat	3
11	Al-Jabal al-Akhdar	2
12	Darnah	2
13	Al-Butnan	3
14	Fezzan	5
15	Al-Marj	3
16	Central region	2
17	Benghazi	7
Total		59

(UN, 2005, Committee on the Rights of the Child. CRC/C/LBY, p.30)

## **2.8 Cultural perspective of inclusion in Libya.**

Every culture develops its own set of values and assumptions (Khalifa, 2000; Hofstede, 1991). In any country or culture, some of this will be held in common but each individual will hold a unique set of knowledge and beliefs that mark him/her out as a separate person and personality (Leigh, 1995; Ross, 1993). Not only do sense selectively but also add, from experience, to our sensory information and amplify an otherwise incomplete sensory experience (ibid). Wider culture and experience will influence this. In other words a culture is not something that is

planned, controlled or organised but is continuously changing. A culture is what people do, the experiences they have, and the values, ideas and dreams they have in common (Leigh, 1995; Ross, 1993). Human cultures vary considerably, one from the other; although different in certain respects, cultures also resemble one another to a certain extent (Khalifa, 2000, p. 68; Hofstede, 1991)

With a common language and being almost totally Islamic, Libya appears socially homogenous. The people are seen as sharing common values, ideologies and needs (ibid). Hence, it may be easy to identify the social problems and the actual needs arising, and what their priorities are. The lack of social differences means that there will not be vast differences in the way in which people will react to a suggested educational innovation.

At the time of independence in 1951, Libya was one of the poorest countries in the world, with few known natural resources, and a population that was small, poor and illiterate (Al-Fathly & Ibrahim,1997; Al- Jhemy,1992). Since 1963, oil revenues have allowed the rapid development of education (ibid). Thus, education is seen as relatively new, is valued as it is seen as opening doors to new opportunities and secures employment. Females fifty years ago did not have equal opportunities and this influenced education (ibid).

It is widely recognized that the educational process in any society is affected by the sociocultural factors within that particular society (Tudor, 2001; Shamim, 1996; Coleman, 1996& Holliday, 1994). Teachers and students operate within a sociocultural setting and their beliefs and expectations are influenced by the norms of that particular setting (ibid). When students and teachers come to a classroom they bring with them, beliefs and expectations about who does what inside the class, what to teach, and how to teach (ibid). This section addresses the key characteristics of Libyan educational culture.

Libyan students often assume that their role in the classroom is to sit quietly and to memorize the information imparted by the teacher (Aldabbus, 2008). It is considered rude and impolite to interrupt the teacher or argue with the teacher (ibid). Students try to be as quiet as possible to show respect to their teacher (ibid). If a student has a question, he/she must raise a hand for the teacher's permission to ask their questions (ibid). Students are seated in desks arranged in rows facing the front of the classroom, and typically participate in classroom activities only when they are called upon by the teacher. Such assumptions about students' role might prevent students from taking part in classroom activities where students' active involvement is required (ibid).

Libya is a highly conservative Islamic society, and many of the cultural norms that are common in the Libyan society stem from the principles of Islam (Deeb & Deeb, 1982). Many Libyan parents tend to send their children to Quranic schools at early ages (ibid). In these schools, children sit in circles where they compete to memorize and recite as many Quranic verses as they can (ibid). The Imam (the teacher) often reads aloud verses from the Quran, and children read aloud after the Imam, trying to mimic the Imam's pronunciation (ibid). Within these schools, children are taught that showing respect to adults is an important element of the Islamic religion, and therefore children are not encouraged to dispute and argue with people who are older than them (ibid). The influence of the Islamic religion extends into how parents raise their children. The Libyan family often emphasizes the importance of listening attentively to adults, and respecting their opinions (ibid). Children are often not encouraged to participate in conversations or discussions, particularly if these discussions are among adults (ibid). If children do not follow these rules, they are punished by their parents (ibid).

Libyan culture emphasizes the value of saving face over maintaining conversation (Deeb & Deeb, 1982). Even if you disagree with someone's points of view, it is considered impolite to explicitly show your disagreement. In addition, within Libyan culture, there is always separation between males and females (ibid). The reason for this is because males and females are not brought up together; there is always separation even within the families. As a result females and males grow up without having close relationships. Therefore, in classrooms, it

might be seen as a violation of the sociocultural norms to work in mixed sex groups (ibid). Even in mixed schools of males and females, interactions within the classroom usually occur among groups of the same sex. That is, males tend to speak only with each other, while females also prefer to keep to themselves.

Knowledge within Libyan society is traditionally viewed as a set of facts not open for discussion or disagreement (ibid). The text books are highly regarded as an important source of knowledge. Students are supplied with textbooks about different school subjects, and are expected to master and comprehend the content of these textbooks without questioning their credibility. According to a report by the Ministry of Education:

The evaluation of the knowledge content of the Libyan curricula assures the educators' interest in supplying students with knowledge and information. To an extent, some teachers and parents think that the knowledge content of the curricula has exceeded the learners' abilities (The Libyan National Commission for Education, 2004, p.64).

Thus, learning is often seen as an individual endeavour rather than a collective and dynamic process. Students compete to pass exams, and those who achieve high grades in the exams are highly regarded by Libyan society (The Libyan National Commission for Education, 2004). Families tend to openly show their pride in children who pass the exams with high grades. A key public role that the teachers are expected to fulfil is to prepare students to pass their exams. If students cannot reach this goal, teachers will be held responsible for the students' failure (ibid). This responsibility compels teachers to concentrate on teaching the skills that are tested in the exams and ignore the skills that are not examined.

Exams often focus on testing students' memorization of the information imparted by the teacher. A report by the Ministry of Education highlights the role of memorization within the Libyan educational culture:

Education in Libya has a traditional character in methods and schemes. It is interested in supplying students with information, but it does not care much for scientific thinking methods. Undoubtedly, the emphasis on learning information by heart, for which the learner is rewarded with high grades, is one of the obstacles to innovative thinking, and preparing students for knowledge production (The Libyan National Commission for Education, 2004, p.65)

Gaad (2004) reports, that, over the years, the attitudes of common people have been technically affected by the cultural beliefs and value system, thus their attitude towards inclusion and mainstreaming is influenced in the same way. In spite of this, people in Libya have turned up to have a considerable change and an awareness of the different intellectual conditions. It has even brought change in the terminology used for references (ibid). For example, the researcher has observed that over the years those with Down's syndrome are not referred to as "Mongols" anymore within the education arena (ibid). This means the recognition and acceptance to the people with disability in the society have noticeable development (ibid). Other countries, such as the U.K. do not encourage the mentally disabled to be institutionalized but rather participate in communal activities to ensure growth (ibid).

On the other hand, in Africa, intellectual disabilities are associated with witchcraft and other evil activities (Gaad, 2004). Therefore, people often discourage inclusion and any sort of educational services provided to children with disabilities is held back (ibid). In Arabic countries, disabled students are placed specifically in designated schools for mentally retarded people (ibid).

Special schools for the handicapped gave way to the inclusive setting in regular schools which is aimed to encourage the growth of all children through proper interaction and understanding (Van Reusen, Shoho & Barker, 2001). Due to this, new models have been adopted where mainstreaming takes on a more positive role in schools. This proactive and positive approach is manifested within Response to Intervention (RTI). The primary focus of RTI within the American schooling system is to provide early and effective assistance to children who are having difficulty in learning (Shores, 2009). The RTI model is a remarkable development in diagnosing learning disabilities in students. Also, through effective planning and implementation, it can increase student academic achievement and lessen behavioural problems.

Shores (2009), claims that the RTI model can be used as a framework for school improvement plan nationwide. RTI has the history of 30 years influencing and most educators have been able to effectively carry out its procedures at their schools (Shores, 2009). Similarly, other Asian countries, such as, India, Nepal, Korea, Malaysia and China all support inclusion (Gaad, 2004).

## **2.9 Current vision of inclusive education in Libya.**

Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb (2014) conducted systematic research of inclusive education in Arab countries. The research indicated that most of the studies were published in the last seven years and were carried out in just three of these countries: Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. All studies reviewed, used the survey methodology; none was experimental.

Inclusive education research in Arab countries addressed three main topics: (1) attitudes toward Inclusive education, (2) outcomes of inclusive education programmes, and (3) barriers to inclusive education. The results of studies investigating attitudes toward inclusive education in Arab countries showed that teachers' attitudes toward it were mixed. While many studies revealed that educators' attitudes toward Inclusive education were generally neutral to negative, especially concerning the inclusion of children with disabilities, other studies indicated positive attitudes especially for children with mild disabilities. Studies reporting positive attitudes toward Inclusive education for children with disabilities also reported that it posed numerous challenges to teachers. These challenges arose from limited training, lack of qualified practitioners, and lack of support.

Studies also indicated that the main barriers to Inclusive education in Arab countries were inaccessible buildings; crowded classrooms; lack of educational materials and supportive devices; rigid and inflexible curricula; inadequate training of teachers; non-inclusive policies (inappropriate learning environment; poor student progress; and poor support from school administrators and teachers). Most studies examining the outcomes of Inclusive education

reported better academic and social development of children with disabilities in regular schools, and parents and children were generally satisfied with the inclusion experience.

To understand the overall perception of Libya towards education, it is necessary to consider its three phases of evolution. This development mirrors the social, economic and cultural development of Libyan society.

In the first phase, the concept of inclusive education was primarily focused on the high rate of illiteracy in Libya (over 85 % of men and over 90% of women were illiterate (GPCE, 2008). In other words, the priority of the educational system was the spread of education to address illiteracy, through providing access to inclusive education for all sections of the population, regardless of gender or location. The Libyan state directed the entire educational system to achieve this objective by any means, regardless of cost, through a comprehensive educational policy for all (GPCE, 2008). Education is still compulsory for males and females alike, by the rule of the Education law of 1971, and free for all, with no distinction over quality or social status (GPCE, 2008).

The second phase took place in the 1980s, with the spread of education increased literacy rates across the population (GPCE, 2008). Education improved in quantity and quality; in this period the concept of inclusive education evolution developed significantly, and the social and economic transformation plan (1981-1985) emerged (GPCE, 2008). The implementation of this plan required substantial adjustments in the educational system, both in terms of the extent and the content of programmes (GPCE, 2008). This is what was known as ‘the new educational structure’ (GPCE, 2008, p. 20); this is a perception, a philosophy and a strategy for inclusive education. In addition to retaining the previous notion of education that had been developed in the 1970s, this new educational structure approached a method of specialized secondary education, or what is known in Libya as ‘specialized secondary schools’ (GPCE, 2008, p. 20). These secondary schools had two paths for students: either to continue their study in higher education, or to enter the labour market and professional life. Of course, this perception has focused on vocational and technical education, as defined by the social and economic

transformation plan (1981-1985) (GPCE, 2008). To monitor certain educational achievements made at this stage, a comparison can be made: In 1940, less than 1% of Libyans could read and write, according to statistics gathered at the time (GPCE, 2008). By the 1980s, the school enrolment rate had reached 65% of those who were able to complete primary, high, secondary and higher education (GPCE, 2008). This tremendous development during this period is worth mentioning in this context, with the increase in enrolment in education among the age group (6 - 24 years); this is a result of the dissemination of education and pursuit of an inclusive education policy by all and for all (GPCE, 2008). School enrolment rates reached 64% in 1973, and 95% in 2003 (GPCE, 2008). As for university education, through the application of inclusive education, attendance increased from 19,315 students in the academic year (1980 - 1981), to 279,150 students in the academic year 2006-2007 (GPCE, 2008). These students have studied and graduated from more than ten universities, and there were still many results and achievements for applying the concept of inclusive education in Libya the most important of these are:

“...1) the growth and increase in education enrolment rates at all educational levels for both genders.

2) The increasing awareness of and social demand for education.

3) The adoption of decentralized and local financial budgets earmarked for education, and work on its renewal and development.

4) The high degree of ambition among young Libyans as a result of inclusive education, and the wide cultural movement that accompanied it – the changing prospects and perceptions of the various population groups, including young males and females, as well as the social mobility caused by education that led to the expansion of the group of qualified people from different educational and training institutions. Thanks to this education, their professional and living style within society has changed and improved; they were freed from illiteracy, and they acquired modern professional knowledge and skills in various fields of specialization.

5) The multiplicity and diversity of educational opportunities and patterns, and the growth of technical and vocational education as a basis for social and economic growth in the community, and as a basis for the industrial and technical base, founded in the Great Jamahiriya, which is progressively growing.

6) Homogeneity of social components weaving in a single cultural identity that led to the unity of thought, action and reaction.

7) The availability of a large number of teachers, and training the necessary administrative staff and educational inspectors and supervisors.

8) Growth and development of higher education, and the trend for the establishment of specialized universities and technical higher institutes, all serve the social and economic development, in addition to their contribution in building the knowledge society which began to grow in quantity and quality.

9) Change in the status of women in the society since they became partners with men in all paths of the social life (GPCE, 2008, p. 21)”.

The third phase of the concept of the inclusive vision of Libyan education is the current period. Since 2000, there has been significant progress in the concept and vision of inclusive education (GPCE, 2008). This development comes in response to domestic, social and economic growth in Libyan society, and in response to regional and global changes, especially the development of knowledge and technology, and the emergence of the knowledge society and the knowledge economy (GPCE, 2008). All these interactive factors have changed the concept of inclusive education in Libya; this development, as with previous progress in the education, preserves the spread of education by and for all. In addition to this, the current vision of inclusive education tends to interact with two states of reality: the current Libyan reality status, and global reality status of knowledge, technical means of communication and the internet (GPCE, 2008). It could be argued that the perception of inclusive education in Libya today means building a knowledge society and growing the knowledge economy, especially since Libya has achieved most of the goals of the third millennium, as defined by the Dakar Education for all conference, before the deadline in 2015(GPCE, 2008).

Libya has moved beyond talking about education and its access for the entire population; education in Libya is now a universal right, guaranteed by law, for males and females, for adults and children, in rural and urban regions alike (GPCE, 2008). Thus, it appears clear that the concept of inclusive education in Libya today means, along with its inclusiveness, the quality and precise specialization, and the preparation of students for the knowledge society, producing or generating this knowledge, and practically applying it, in professional life, in the labour market, or within the family and at home.

### **2.9.1 Segregation or inclusive education.**

Inclusive education is often defined as a journey or movement away from the kind of segregation where children with particular difficulties have been put together with other children whose needs are similar. Frederickson and Cline (2002, p. 63) contend that the creation of special facilities segregating children with special educational needs from other children of their own age can be stigmatizing; it also restricts access to important educational opportunities only found in mainstream education. In this respect questions have been raised about the desirability of systems of special education segregated from mainstream schooling and which may be instrumental in contributing to prejudice and bias both in school and in later life.

Moves to reverse segregation have been gathering momentum since the mid-1960s with arguments that the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools would facilitate their access to and participation in society (Frederickson et al., 2002). More recent decades have witnessed a further shift away from integration and its assumption that additional arrangements are needed to accommodate “special” learners within mainstream schools (that remain essentially unchanged), towards an inclusive education approach which aims to restructure school systems to respond to the diversity of needs of all learners (Ainscow, 1999). The shift towards inclusion evolved with the recognition that many children, including those with disabilities, at some time need special support services. Poverty, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender or membership of a minority group may limit access to or be marginalized within education (Ainscow, 1999).

## **2.10 Summary of the Chapter**

In the light of the research aims and related issues mentioned in chapter one, this chapter presented a brief historical overview of Libya and its educational and cultural contexts. It outlined the country’s significant educational structures, objectives of education, compulsory education and curriculum aims of the schools. Also, in light of the theoretical framework, this chapter aimed to build an overall picture of the educational, cultural and political conditions faced by Libyan teachers.

This chapter represents a significant contribution to our understanding of inclusion debates in, what is widely dubbed ‘inclusive education’ in Libya. Effort has been made to pull together a range of insights from across the world in exploring the meaning of inclusion. A characteristic refusal to focus purely on processes of inclusion sits alongside a focus on what education is for and how human diversity can be encapsulated in educational environments.

A good geographical and historical picture of Libya has been presented to list out the influential factors of education in Libya. Colonial and military rules left the country in the hands of unorganised distribution of power and wealth. The review shows how the revolutionary changes contributed to the realisation of an inclusive society with a demand for a rights-approach as a central component of policy making. The study has well explained how the educational aims have been set to accommodate the demands of the inclusive education in Libya. On the other hand, the information about education in Libya, including special education is only available up to 2008.

This chapter also raised some important issues and challenges to explore, for example disabilities such as background of child disabilities in Libya, schools for disabilities. Also, it brought the current vision of inclusive education in Libya. These issues may have strong impacts on inclusive education. The following chapter (chapter three) presents literature review.

# CHAPTER THREE LITERATURE REVIEW

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## 3.0 Introduction

According to Tilstone, Florian & Rose, (1998) the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools and classrooms is part of a large worldwide human rights movement, which calls for the full inclusion of all people with disabilities in all aspects of life. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) calls on all governments to adopt inclusive policies and enrol all students with disabilities in mainstream schools (UNESCO, 1994). This is because students with disabilities have often been excluded from mainstream schools, schools that they would be attending if they did not have a disability (ibid).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2007) ratified and strengthened calls for inclusion of all people with disabilities in all areas of life. ‘Article 1’ of the convention set out the general principles of the convention, which include non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity and full effective participation of persons (UNESCO, 2007). However, this chapter covers the literature pertaining to the foci of this research. That is, to explore teachers’ perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting students with disabilities in Libya.

The chapter is divided into seven major sections. Firstly, it sets the scene for inclusive education; secondly, it outlines perspectives on inclusion of children with disabilities; thirdly, it considers the journey to inclusive education. The fourth section looks at criticisms of inclusive education and the fifth section considers the concept of disability. The sixth section is about school culture and inclusive education and the final section explains and analyses overall aspects of inclusive education and teaching.

### **3.1 Setting the Scene for Inclusive Education.**

Setting of the scene for the study is considered important, in the hope of providing an explanation of what leads to full inclusion in education. The definition of inclusive education, the journey to inclusive education, and principles of inclusive education appear as major themes for discussion. Each of these themes is presented in turn, to provide the literature in a clear and coherent manner.

#### **3.1.1 Definition of Inclusive Education.**

The definition of inclusive education has not been officially described in the literature; different authors on the subject have endeavoured to define and interpret inclusive education along with the whole school approach, where all children are educated together. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) inclusive education is described as:

“... a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through inclusive practices in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the mainstream system to educate all children. (UNESCO, 2005a, p.13)

The ‘Salamanca Framework’ focuses on inclusive education as a strategy to include children with special educational needs in mainstream education by responding to the needs of individual learner’s (UNESCO – Salamanca Statement 1994).

“... Inclusive education” implies that children and youth with special educational needs should be included in the educational arrangements made for the majority of children... Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of students, accommodation of both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. (UNESCO, 1994, p.7)

These definitions of inclusive education agree with definition of General Peoples’ Committee of Education Report (GPCE, 2008) as stated:

“... Thus, it appears clear that concept of inclusive education in Libya today, at this stage means, along with its inclusiveness, the quality and precise specialization, and the rehabilitation of students for the knowledge, society, and produce or generate this knowledge, and practically apply it, both in the professional life in

the labour market or in the private life in the family and home”. (GPCE, 2008, p. 22)

According to (UNESCO – Salamanca Statement 1994) the following requirements are necessary to achieve inclusive education:

- “... **1** Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- 2** Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- 3** The education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- 4** Those with special education needs must have access to mainstream schools, which should accommodate them with a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.
- 5** Mainstream schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Moreover, mainstream schools provide an effective education to the majority of children, and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire educational system.” (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii-ix)

Having highlighted the above, several authors have attempted to define what constitutes inclusive education. For instance, Mastropiere and Scruggs (2004) defined inclusive education as the education provided for children with disabilities in the mainstream classroom, where instruction is provided by the mainstream classroom teacher. Mitchell (2005, p. 4) stated that:

...Although there is no universally accepted definition of inclusive education, there is a growing international consensus as to the principle features of this multi-dimensional concept. With regard to students with disabilities, these include the following: entitlement to full membership in mainstream, age-appropriate classes in their neighbourhood school; access to appropriate aids and support services, individualized programmes, with appropriately differentiated curriculum and assessment practices.

Brown (2005) may concur, arguing that the term inclusive education is interpreted and applied in many different and sometimes contradicting ways in different cultures. On this Artiles and Dyson (2005) write that “...Inclusive education is a multi-dimensional phenomenon where different countries, schools and classrooms define and develop in different directions as it suits their needs.” (p. 37). “...The concept of inclusive education has been gaining momentum around the world, by virtue of it being included in policies of international organizations such as the United Nations” (Gaad, 2011, p. 82).

However, other policy documents have clouded this mandate. They have shifted the focus from inclusive education to a focus on simply providing students with disabilities with an education (Mitchell, 2005). The inclusion factor is side-lined and the provision of education to children with disabilities remains in separate special education programmes (Ainscow, 2007). While some of these initiatives have helped some previously excluded children to receive an education, they have been needlessly at odds with the vision of the Salamanca Statement and have, in some cases, seriously undermined it (ibid). For example, Mastropieri and Scruggs (2004) defined inclusive education as the education provided for students with disabilities in a mainstream school, where instruction is provided by a mainstream teacher. Others take an “education for all” perspective, arguing that all disadvantaged students such as those from poor backgrounds, ethnic minorities, disabled, gifted or talented students, and girls in some cultures (Ainscow, 2007; Cheminais, 2001; Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan & Shaw 2000; Stainback & Stainback, 1996). For example, in South Africa inclusive education is focused on all vulnerable students, including overaged learners who experience language barriers, children in prison, and children in poverty, in addition to students with disabilities (Naiker, 2005).

According to Bryant, Smith and Bryant (2008), some professionals support full inclusion where all children are served in the mainstream classroom all the time. Studies show that mainstream schools are the favoured, and have the most appropriate settings for all students (ibid). Comparative studies also found better results for students in mainstream settings, in comparison to those in special schools (Friend & Bursuck, 2006). Professionals who support the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools consider that all students have a right to completely inclusive educational practices where they can benefit from being included in a school setting with their peers (Bryant et al., 2008). However, there are other professionals who disagree that full inclusion, where students with disabilities are given all their education in a mainstream education setting, is not enough to support students with more severe needs, whether these needs are academic, emotional, social or physical (Bryant et al., 2008).

One study shows that some parents feel that children with conditions that can lead to disruptive behaviour, such as cerebral palsy, will only distract other students in the class and may also affect their learning (Palmer, Fuller & Nelson, 2001). On the other hand, studies conducted by Loreman et al. (2005) show that children with disabilities spent similar levels of engaged time during classes compared to their non-disabled peers, and as a consequence there was no loss of instructional time.

However, Loreman et al., (2005) states that the division of students into non-mainstream schools and mainstream schools will perpetuate the idea that there are two kinds of children, disabled and non-disabled, and two ways of teaching children, special education and non-special education. Ballard (2004) stresses that increasing means in special education will be based on the ideas and practices of special education, and will, as a result, involve limited changes in mainstream education to cater for disabled children. According to Spedding (2005), these include not only those students with a disability but also those students with learning difficulties and behaviour disorders, those from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds, those with chronic medical conditions, and all those who are at risk in the school environment for whatever reasons.

Inclusive education involves overcoming practices that segregate throughout the education system. Ballard (2004) says that educating children in segregated environments and requiring them to follow different courses of study to their peers, in terms of content and learning environment, is not inclusion. With inclusion, efforts are made to ensure that the needs of all students are met within an equitable and accepting education system (Ibid).

Villa and Thousand (2005) viewed inclusive education as a "... belief system, not just a set of strategies." (p. 5). However, Mentis, Quinn and Ryba (2005) suggest a clear understanding of the meanings of inclusive education. These authors therefore define inclusive education as being to do with more than mere placement in the mainstream classroom. "It involves attitudes, values and beliefs that extend beyond schools to the wider community" (Ibid, p.76).

Booth and Ainscow (2002), for instance, viewed inclusion as a process which accommodates the learning and participation of all learners. This is supported by Skidmore (2004), who states

that inclusion is described as a process whereby the teaching practices and curriculum activities are geared towards building the capacity to accept all learners into the mainstream school contexts.

Inclusive education has also been defined as a 'right', where all children are accepted and taught together in mainstream classrooms; therefore, complying with the view of their basic human rights (Artiles & Dyson, 2005; Mitchell, 2005). Zions (2005) argues that "... full inclusion is designed to accommodate all students with disabilities in general education classrooms." (p. 7). While all these definitions and interpretations of inclusion have been considered, the one that was applicable for this study is that of Foreman. He says, "...In education, inclusion is based on the philosophy that schools should, without question, provide for the needs of all the children in their communities, whatever the level of their ability or disability" (Foreman 2005, p. 12).

According to Ashman and Elkins (2002), when children are left alone and proper directions and redemptive strategies are not provided at the earliest stages of their development, the disability can exacerbate their conditions. What these children require is appropriate teaching strategies, curriculum, and an environment that is conducive to fostering maximum learning opportunities (Ainscow, 1999; Lehmann, 2004). Several authors have therefore argued that children should not, however, be seen from their deficit and/or medical perspective, but rather from the strengths they already have, and capable adults should consider how they can improve in their deficit areas. Two researchers Scruggs and Mastropieri, (1996), reviewed 28 investigations spanning from 1958 to 1995 that were conducted in the United States, Canada and parts of Australia. The review focused on identifying mainstream teachers perceptions towards inclusive education. From their studies, they found that two-thirds of mainstream teachers supported the concept of inclusion, and that they were willing to teach children with special needs in their class. Smith, Polloway, Patton and Dowdy (2008) argue that students with disabilities exhibit specific conditions that result in the need for additional educational assistance in schools.

Some other schools of thought view inclusive education as being for the wellbeing of all students (Daniels, 2000; Nind, Sheehy, Rix & Simmons, 2003). Inclusive education is a method of achieving human rights in social relations and conditions (Clough & Corbett, 2000); the process of developing the students participating in the curriculum and minimising the marginalisation of cultures and societies in the environment is the most essential centre of learning (Booth, 1999); a procedure relating to the morals concerned with growing a school's capability to act in response to learner variety, and to encourage more involvement for all students (ibid). In an effort to resolve the issue UNESCO supported the suggestion of inclusive education to progress, mainly starting from a small consideration on special education or integration to a bigger and more comprehensive definition that is currently used by UNESCO: a process of tackling and reacting to the variety of needs of all students by increasing partaking in learning, cultures and communities, and minimising exclusion in education (UNESCO, 2006). Hornby (2012) suggests that the term inclusion has a variety of interpretations, including the notion of social inclusion. For some students, having separate education can actually be more beneficial than learning in a mainstream environment. Teaching is often in smaller groups which can aid social inclusion.

### **3.1.2 Principles inclusive education.**

The principle of mainstreaming has been regarded as a policy shift towards achieving education of students with disabilities in mainstream schools (Cole & Chan, 1990). According to some commentators, the initial intent of mainstreaming was to place students with disabilities (both physical, cognitive, and learning) from segregated settings to the mainstream schools (Ballard, 1999; Pijl, Meijer, Hegarty, 1997; Hegarty, 1993). However, "...[some] teachers fear that what may actually happen is 'main dumping', the placement of children who have handicaps into ordinary pre-schools and classrooms without provision of resources to meet the child's special learning needs." (Ballard, 1988, p.235). Whilst mainstreaming has been fostered based on values (Ballard, 1998), it is also based on moral grounds (Pijl et al., 1997). A vital achievement in this process is placing students with disabilities, who were once segregated, with their non-disabled peers to develop positive relationships in mainstream schools (Cole & Chan, 1990). Another achievement is the placement of students with disabilities in an environment which is regarded as being as 'mainstream' or 'advantageous' as it is to the non-disabled students

(Ballard, 1988; Nirje, 1985; Pijl et al., 1997). However, Wood (2006) points out that when mainstreaming, a student must demonstrate his/her ability to keep up with the work performed by non-disabled students (p. 20). The principles of inclusion help in taking all students as members of a learning community regardless of their situation. According to Bryant et al., (2008), the philosophy of full inclusion borrows heavily from reflection of civil rights issues and the rights of all students to be educated together. They add that within this framework, students' special needs are assessed and supported as far as possible with a range of services available only when completely necessary (ibid).

According to Foreman (2005) inclusive principles, such as all students belonging, support the rights of students to be educated with their peers in a significant way. He also says that it is the foundation for making the classroom or school a more welcoming place, where correct learning experiences are available for everyone. He further adds that membership of, and belonging to, a community is facilitated by inclusive education and it provides a diverse interesting environment in which all students are nurtured and taught together (Foreman, 2005). However, Norwich (2013) dealt with a comprehensive discussion about the importance of the relationships between home, school and Local Educational Authorities to make special educational needs provision more effective. The sample used by Norwich complained that Local Education Authorities failed to develop successful co-ordination because schools' efforts on their own are not enough for successful inclusion. Thus the interviewer did not find any positive attitude to development of home, school and Local Educational Authority partnership.

Mittler (2005) pointed out an obvious switch from special education to inclusive education around the world. Having experienced the marginalisation of disabled students for a long time in special schools, the only option was to incorporate students into mainstream schools, especially in the western world, during the early 1980s (Operti & Belalcazar, 2008; Mittler, 2005). The physically challenged were incorporated to study alongside the non-disabled once without the required facilities to assist them in effectively participating. This combination was carried out in various forms, which included unfair marginalisation in the special and mainstream schools, non-mainstream removal from mainstream classes and placement in special classes in mainstream schools, and marginalised activity groups (ibid). Mittler (2005)

pointed out a misunderstanding between integration and inclusive education in the subject as they are used interchangeably; he explained the difference between them as regards their value and practices (ibid). Integrated education is about disabled children going to mainstream schools (the focus is on attendance rates); inclusive education is about disabled children learning effectively once they are in mainstream schools (the focus is on quality of learning) (ibid).

The literature on special education contains debates on the difference between the terms integration and inclusion (Ainscow, 1995; Frederickson & Cline, 2002). Frederickson and Cline (2002, p.65), state that:

Integration is about making a limited number of additional arrangement for individual pupils with special education need in schools which themselves change little overall. On the other hand, inclusion implies the introduction of a more radical set of changes through which schools restructure themselves so as to be able to embrace all children. Integration involves the school in a process of assimilation where the onus is on the individual to make changes so that they can 'fit in'. By contrast inclusion involves the school in a process of accommodation where the onus is on the school to change, adapting curricula, methods, materials and procedures so that it becomes more responsive.

Spedding (2005) says that teachers must become aware of the main beliefs and processes of inclusion and have a positive attitude to the inclusion of students with disabilities, in order to accept and adapt to their new responsibilities. She adds that teachers will then develop new competencies and work as team members committed to every student with the opportunity to achieve their potential (ibid). That all students 'belong' is one of the main tenets of inclusive education (ibid). It includes the notion that, in spite of the severity of their disabilities or the complexity of their needs, all students can be housed in mainstream classes in their neighbourhood schools (Peters, 2003).

The only way of including students with disabilities in their classroom communities is when they are socially accepted by their classmates and appreciated by their teachers (Smith et al., 2008). This acceptance is established in the daily interaction with their classmates as well as in the organisation and planning of classroom activities (ibid). This can be established by inclusive teachers who will take those disabled students into account (ibid).

The importance for disabled students of belonging in a school community is highlighted by Peterson and Hittie (2003), in that the welcoming and positive attitudes of staff and mainstream students toward the learning needs of disabled students promotes, for those students, the sense of belonging to a school community. In addition, those students should feel a sense of belonging in order to succeed in their studies (Smith et al., 2008).

It has been widely accepted that all individuals can learn irrespective of their physical or mental state (Foreman, 2005). He also says that it may be initially challenging and time consuming for some teachers to investigate and apply changes and some may feel challenged both personally and professionally (ibid). Additionally, these challenges offer chances for schools and teachers to promote learning environments that welcome diversity and allow teachers to contribute significantly to the community and school (ibid).

According to Jonkinsobn (1997), mainstreamisation in education means making the greatest utilization of the mainstream school system, with least dependence of separated facilities. All students and their parents should be able to choose the most suitable school in the same way that a non-disabled student would do (Foreman, 2005). The theory of mainstreamisation holds the idea that people are allowed to live as mainstream a life as possible, and that their daily patterns should be as close as possible to those in mainstream of society (Jenkinson, 1997; Foreman, 2005). It is crucial, from a school's perspective, that disabled students are given positions that are respected by the school community. Disabled students should have the ability to share in the school's daily activity, and perform positive and valuable roles wherever possible (Foreman, 2005). However, it is essential that these social roles are valorised if disabled people are to be included genuinely in the community (Foreman, 2005). This highlights that the rest of the community should appreciate the roles and opportunities given to disabled people, moreover, their education, living condition, work, and their daily activities should not differ greatly from what is valued within the society in which they function (ibid).

### **3.2 Perspectives on inclusion of children with disabilities.**

According to Bryant, Smith, and Bryant (2008), some professionals support full inclusion where all students are served in the mainstream classroom all the time. Studies show that mainstream schools are the favoured and most appropriate settings for all students (Bryant, et al., 2008). This is further evidenced through comparative studies which have also found better results for those students in mainstream settings in comparison to those in special schools (Friend & Bursuck, 2006).

Professionals who support the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools consider that all students have a right to completely inclusive educational practices, where they can benefit from being included into a school setting with their peers (Bryant et al., 2008)

Dukmak (2013) found that teachers overall showed supportive attitudes towards inclusion, and male teachers had more supportive attitudes than female teachers. A Teachers' age was not relevant to their attitudes to inclusion while their years of experience negatively correlated with their attitudes. However, there are other professionals who disagree that full inclusion, where students with disabilities are given all their education in a general education setting, is not enough to support students with more severe needs, whether these needs are academic, emotional, social or physical (Bryant et al., 2008). There is concern that the needs of these students will not be addressed sufficiently to give an appropriate education. For example, study by Palmer, Fuller, Arora, and Nelson (2001) show that some parents of children with disabilities had reservations about putting their children into mainstream schools. They feel that the general education programmes in the mainstream schools are not educationally appropriate or welcoming to their children (ibid).

According to Spedding (2005) these include not only those students with a disability but also those students with learning difficulties and behaviour disorders, those from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds, those with chronic medical conditions, and all those who

are at risk in the school environment for whatever reason. Inclusive education involves overcoming practices that are segregated throughout the education system (ibid).

Ballard (2004) says that educating children in segregated environments and requiring them to follow different courses of study to their peers, in terms of content and learning environment, is not inclusion. With inclusion, efforts are made to ensure that the needs of all students are met within an equitable and accepting education system (ibid).

Other scholars have also defined inclusive education as a process which evolves as changes in the education context emerge, Booth and Ainscow (2002), for instance, viewed inclusion as a process which accommodates the learning and participation of all learners. This is supported by Skidmore (2004) who states that inclusion is described as a process, whereby the teaching practices and curriculum activities are geared towards building the capacity to accept all learners into the mainstream school contexts. Nisreen (2012) studied the pros and cons of inclusive education from the perceptions of teachers in the UAE. The main findings of the study indicated that the participating teachers agreed in principle with the goals of inclusion, however, they were generally unsatisfied with the way those practices worked in their schools. The problems reported by teachers included lack of sufficient equipment, resources and services and a limited number of certified education personnel. In addition they also reported a lack of proper training for teachers in mainstream classrooms, lack of guidance policies and insufficient knowledge of senior administrators. Furthermore, these teachers expressed concerns of the effect of time taken away from the rest of the students, the large class sizes and safety of children with special needs. Such concerns might be justified as inclusion is a relatively new educational practice in the country.

In all, there have been several studies carried out concerning teachers and their approach towards inclusive education and the supposed profits and setbacks in teaching all students in a general class (Bradshaw & Mundia, 2006; Subban & Sharma, 2006). According to Bradshaw & Mundia (2006) this has revealed the views of teachers of education that inclusive education

affects their adoption of the concept; though teachers who are trained are exposed to inclusive education and the practice of inclusion established an enhanced approach with regard to inclusive learners. The quantitative field study of 166 randomly picked student teachers, noted that even after one course in special education, teacher attitudes improved (Bradshaw et al., 2006). Though the proof was backed by related quantitative studies (McCann, 2008; Stubbs, 2009), it is not reasonable to draw conclusions based on the fact that if instructors are given basic training it will change their perceptions and abilities, and cause these teachers to improve in inclusive learner success.

### **3.2.1 Inclusive education! Why?**

It is one of the many advantages of inclusive education that it can be beneficial for all provided it is properly organised and planned (Stainback & Stainback, 1992 & Loreman, Deppeler, Harvey, 2005). According to Mittler (2000), the aim of inclusion in education is to restructure and reform the school in the right direction so that all children can be part of all the social and educational opportunities offered at a school. The provision of such reform brings forth an environment where there is no segregation or isolation. Mittler, further argues that a reform like this requires a radical rethink in policy, and that such policies should be designed to benefit all (ibid). This includes those from ethnic or linguistic minorities, those with disabilities or any other kind of learning difficulty as well as children who often is absent or at the risk of exclusion (ibid).

Skjorten invites for a radical reviewing of educational policies, however states that the road to reach inclusion is long, and amongst other things it will also require:

- a change of heart and attitude
- a reorientation related to assessment, teaching methods and classroom management including adjustment of the environment
- redefinition of teachers roles and reallocation of human resources
- an overall flexible educational system including a flexible curriculum and examination system (Skjorten, 2001,p.39).

The essence of inclusive education is to create a free and safe environment where all children learn and feel belongingness in their society and schools. To make this possible it requires a philosophy where diversity is valued, and according to Stainback and Stainback, (1992) a diversity that strengthens the group of pupils in a class, and offers all of its participants an improved potential for learning. Befring comments on these shared benefits as the Enrichment Perspective, and describes in the same line, pointing out "...when a school, community, or a society adapts and is responsive to the needs and distinctive features of people with differing needs and abilities (e.g., disabilities) it enriches everyone, pupils and educators alike"(Befring, 2001,p.52).

Eklindh and Brule-Balescut, (2006), mention four factors as key elements in the practice of inclusion referring to a UNESCO Conceptual Paper (2003). Firstly, that inclusion is a continuous process, claiming it will always be better way of responding to diversity (ibid). Secondly, inclusion has to deal with the identification and removal of barriers, where the endeavour for further evidence is important to encourage for innovations and problem solving. Thirdly, inclusion is about presence, participation and achievement of all students. And lastly, inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement (ibid). Eklindh and Brule-Balescut, explore a moral responsibility among the schools and local authorities that requires the careful monitoring of these groups according to the third element.

Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2005) believe that the inclusive environment rewards everyone stating that the best thing about inclusion is that everyone wins. They also argue that:

- Diverse abilities among children in schools are more likely to stimulate better communication and social skills.
- Inclusive settings also often give the children with disabilities an improved academic programme, which results in improved skill acquisition and increased academic achievements.

- Children with disabilities who attend inclusive schools also experience enhanced social acceptance; and friendships with non-disabled is more likely to occur.
- An inclusive setting gives children with disabilities a broader general knowledge, which in effect enhances their social capabilities, and subsequently results in an increased income in their adult lives.
- Benefits of inclusive schools to children without disabilities are also compelling, and ranges from having better student/staff ratio, to a better overall funding to the class. The resources that are moved from special units should be to the benefit of all (Loreman, Deppeler& Harvey, 2005).

### **3.3 The journey to inclusive education.**

It is important to stress the tremendous diversity in Arab countries despite a common culture, language, and religion and physical and geographic environment. According to Al-Krenawi, Graham, Dean, & Eltaiba (2004):

“...Arab societies are highly diverse and consist of heterogeneous systems of social differentiation based on ethnic, linguistic, sectarian, familial, tribal, regional, socioeconomic, and national identities”(p. 103).

Weber (2012) noted there are wide differences between these countries in terms of citizen’s rights; immigration and social integration; religion; culture; social norms; and civil conflict. These differences in Arab countries clearly impact on social justice and human rights movements, including disability rights.

In general, the situation of inclusive education in Arab societies has been changing slowly for the better over the past 30 years. Both governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations have become more active in protecting rights of the disabled, improving educational opportunities for them, promoting their independence and integration into society

and launching public awareness and education programmes with the primary purpose of protecting their rights and enhancing their living conditions (Weber, 2012).

The twentieth century witnessed a historical development of inclusive education awakening many countries. The movement towards inclusive education for children with special needs began in the 1960s (Foreman, 2005). United Nations (UN) has made a number of influential declarations regarding inclusive education, such as the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All was held in Jomtien, Thailand. A further conference in 2000 in Senegal gave rise to the Dakar framework for Education for All, in which the international community pledged to ensure education as a right for all people, irrespective of individual differences (Foreman, 2005). Subsequently, in 1994, inclusive education was put forward as an important concept at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education in Spain. The Salamanca statement is considered to be the most significant international document regarding special education (Ainscow & Cesar, 2006). It describes inclusive education as a framework for action that would accommodate all children "regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions" (Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, UNESCO, 1994, Article 3). This includes disadvantaged or marginalized children, such as street and working children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, and children with special educational needs and disabilities. This statement exhorts the international community to entertain inclusive educational setting and to fight against all discriminatory attitudes in view of a broadminded society where education is for all (UNESCO, 1994). Essentially, the Salamanca Conference on Special Needs Education gave approval to the notion of inclusive education (Ainscow & Cesar, 2006). The UNESCO International Conference on Education was held in Geneva in 2008 and the focus of this conference was the inclusion of a more diverse range of learners, regardless of ability or characteristics, as well as the promotion of respect for the needs and abilities of learners and the elimination all forms of discrimination (UNESCO, 2009).

Exclusion from participation in economic and social life, political and cultural communities is one of the paramount challenges faced by individuals in most societies around the world (UNESCO, 2005). The involvement of inclusive education as a movement seeks to challenge exclusionary policies and practices (Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, Farrell, Frankham, Gallannaugh, Howes and Smith, 2006). Hence, it is generally accepted that inclusive education has its foundations in the human rights pronounced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UNESCO, 2005), which explains: the need for compulsory education and its channelling to the full development of human personality and fortification for basic human freedoms (UNESCO, 2005). This will assist in the promotion of understanding, acceptance and friendship among all nations, racial/religious groups, and may help to enhance the activities of the United Nations (UNESCO, 1994).

Inclusive education has been indirectly advocated since the United Nations (UN) Declaration in 1948 and has been cited at all phases in a number of key UN Declarations and Conventions (UNESCO, 2005, p. 13-14). These include:

- The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which ensures the right to receive education without discrimination on any grounds. Under this convention all children are deemed to be treated as equals without any favouritism or bias, for the purpose of an unimpaired perception in the process of early education.
- The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien Declaration), which set the goal of Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO, 1990). These goals are known to involve an easy and flexible curriculum, accessibility to all without taking cognisance of any disability, without any discrimination on the basis of gender, race, colour, belief, poverty, and creed (UNESCO, 1990).
- In 1993, the rule of the UN was to achieve equal opportunities for people with disabilities, which does not confirm the equal rights of all children, youths, and adults with disabilities to education, but that education should be provided within the integrated framework and in school in general (UNESCO, 1994).

Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994): more than 300 participants representing 92 governments and 25 international organisations met in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994, to further the objective of education for all. They did this by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely through enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs (UNESCO, 1994). The 1994 Salamanca statement recognises education as a fundamental right of all children, including children with disabilities (UNESCO, 1994). It calls for education systems to be inclusive and designed to take into account the diversity of all children. It states as an underlying belief that: mainstream schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all (UNESCO, 1994). Moreover, schools with an inclusive orientation provide an effective education to the majority of children, and improve the efficiency, and ultimately, the cost effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994). The Statement calls on governments to:

- 1- Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improving their education systems to enable them to include all children, regardless of individual differences or difficulties.
- 2- Adopt, as a matter of law or policy, the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in mainstream schools unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
- 3- Develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries that have experience with inclusive schools.
- 4- Establish decentralized and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating educational provision for children and adults with special education needs.
- 5- Encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organisations working with persons with disabilities in the planning and decision-making processes concerning provision for special educational needs.
- 6- Invest greater effort in early identification and intervention strategies, as well as in vocational aspects of inclusive education.
- 7- Ensure that, in the context of a systemic change, teacher education programmes, both pre-service and in-service, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools. (UNESCO, 1994,p . ix-x)

Further, the Salamanca Statement (1994) proclaimed that: "...every child has unique characteristics, interests and learning needs". "...those with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools which should accommodate them with a child centred pedagogy capable of meeting those needs." (UNESCO, 1994,p.2). The Framework for Action for special needs education (1994) emphasises that education for children with special

educational needs should be provided for within inclusive schools, laying out the standards for such schools stating the following:

“...The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognise 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 curricular, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resources use and partnerships with communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school” (UNESCO, 1994, p. 19).

In 2000 a new Framework for Action to reach education for all and Millennium Goals was made ready for new signatures at the World Education Forum in Dakar, 2015 was decided as a new target year to reach these goals (UNESCO, 2000). The Dakar Framework (2000) incorporates the Jomtien and Salamanca declarations and provides guidelines on what kind of learning and what kind of potentials to be developed:

Every child, youth and adult has the human right to benefit from education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education that is geared to tapping each person’s talents and potential and developing learner’s personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies. (UNESCO, 2000, p.8)

On the other hand, the targeted-group approach has actually widened the scope and content of the concept of inclusive education, recognising that inclusive education also raises issues of cultural and social exclusion (Slee, 2001). In response to these issues, precedence has been given to certain excluded groups in policy planning and in the allocation of resources by General People’s Committee of Education (GPCE, 2008). Such precedence, however, has not necessarily been in compliance with inventive approaches for providing relevant learning prospects. Thus, the concentration of inclusive education should not be reduced to targeted categories; but rather, should be extended on the delivery of quality, approachable and different learning surroundings and prospects for all (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005).

According to Tutt (2007), the true challenge lies in providing inclusive settings in all schools through the delivery of a varied continuum of services within a school system that is expressed in conjunction with other social policies. UNESCO (2008a) stated that inclusive education is the means to confronting the challenge facing education in general, while playing a key role in developing an extensive understanding of inclusive education amongst a range of stakeholders, including high-level policy makers, curriculum developers and teachers from over 150

countries around the world. This extensive understanding is revealed in the Conclusions and Recommendations of the International Conference on Education (UNESCO, 2008a); this concept is broad as far as inclusive education is concerned and it can be viewed as a general guiding principle that will enhance learning for the purpose of sustainable development, lifelong learning for all, and unhindered access to learning opportunities for all levels of society (UNESCO, 2008b). Amid other things, the emerging ideology of inclusive education functions to offer a universalized and holistic method of quality education for all, giving a wider understanding of how the perceptions of equality and quality interrelate (Acedo, 2008).

### **3.4 Criticism of inclusive education.**

Inclusive education has achieved a very satisfactory outcome over the years. It has a growing amount of scholarly support and has been described as an “umbrella term against a storm” (Charema, 2010, p. 87). However, inclusive education has also faced considerable criticism from those who argue that inclusion is an imprecise “one size fits all” approach (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). Inclusive education is considered to be a “troubled concept” because different people define it differently and poor consensus about what the term encompasses (Slee, 2008, p. 99). It is intensely discussed about describing students’ identity in an inclusive class and defining a school culture to fit with inclusive education (Slee, 2008). Hornby (2010a) strongly criticised inclusive education on the lack of clarity, even on the meaning of the term ‘inclusion’. The ambiguity insofar as inclusive schools or an inclusive society (ibid) remains questionable.

Lipsky and Gartner (1999) argue that inclusive education has few positive outcomes for special needs children who need specialised services that can only be provided outside regular classrooms. Hegarty (2001) presented three arguments in his critical analysis of inclusive education. Firstly, he argued that the notion of inclusion must signify something other than excellence in education or good schools, which some definitions seem to highlight (ibid). Secondly, he challenges the idea of inclusion for keeping students with special educational needs in a regular school and asserts that it is neither possible nor desirable. For example; students with a visual impairment will need mobility training outside a regular classroom (ibid). Finally, he claimed that while the aim of inclusion is important, an over-emphasis on inclusion

runs the risk of distorting the hierarchy of values in education, which are the core objectives of developing young people's potential and equipping them for adult life (ibid).

Regarding the goals of inclusion Hornby (2010a) brought up a confusion which is related to the definition of inclusive education, labelling and curriculum. He claimed that "...this confusion applies to all children, but is particularly important for children with special educational needs (SEN)" (p.6). Other than the academic achievement, inclusion should be focused on the development of life and social skills that allow a disabled person to function as normal as he could (ibid).

The confusion and controversy about the semantics of inclusion was a matter of discussion for Brown (2010) too. His observation about using the term inclusion in different cultures was that it may sometimes have contradictory effects (ibid). Following the trends of the inclusive movement in the USA and other Western countries, some developing countries tried to introduce the principles of inclusive education in the regular setting (Kibria, 2005). In this context, Singal (2008) believes that growing Northern literature on special and inclusive education can make room for re-examining and reflection on developments and suggest some ways to contextualise Southern realities. In contrast, Charema (2007) believes that Western ideologies and literature are not appropriate for installing inclusion in the existing teacher training programmes of developing countries, and that aiming a Western standard of inclusive education will be impracticable due to the economic and social situations. As Artiles and Dyson (2009) stated that:

"...The inclusion efforts of the affluent Western democracies, where all resourced segregated forms of special education are being merged with equally well resourced regular education, seem to be quite different from those of many economically poorer countries where special education has never been fully developed and where regular education is desperately lacking in resources"(p.3,4).

As a result, there arises a need for varying policies of inclusive education on the basis of their unique socio-economic and political contexts. On the contrary, a few studies (Heiman, 2002; Priestly & Rabiee, 2002) claimed that inclusion would be of little benefit to children with disabilities and consequently questioned the advantages of inclusion; Another study found that

teachers in mainstream education are less supportive of inclusion than those in specialist education (De Boer, Pjil, & Minnaert, 2011). In addition, the impact of inclusion may turn up in different ways. Chhabra, Shrivastava and Srivastava (2010) for example, predict a possible decline in the academic standard of students if they are brought up in an inclusive setting.

In general, teachers' attitudes appear to be ambivalent, which suggest that while they are not opposed to the idea of integrating students with special needs, they have real concerns about the suitability of a mainstream education setting to meet educational needs of these students.

### **3.5 The concept of disability.**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 10% of any population is disabled (Thomas, 2005a). Also, DFID (2000) highlighted the relationship between disability and poverty. Disability was observed in one of the main reasons that lead to isolation and economic strain of the whole family (ibid). The denial of education due to the disability may end up in a lack of employment opportunities. Similarly, poverty can lead to malnutrition, dangerous working and living conditions (including road accidents) bad health and maternity care, poor sanitation, and vulnerability to natural disasters all of which can result in disability (ibid). So it is totally impossible to achieve the complete developmental goal without treating the disability group (ibid).

It is estimated that only 2.5-6% of the population may have a disability, with approximately 98% of children with disabilities not attending any type of educational institution, the current provision (specialist or mainstream, government or non-governmental organization) is clearly not enough to attain EFA (Thomas, 2005a). Human right to education is the heart of inclusive education, pronounced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1949 but disability is clearly a development issue that we ignore at a price, including that of human rights (ibid). Alur (2002) stated that dehumanisation of a person with disability by cultural belief or stigma, prevailing in Libya to an extent, is a grave negligence against rights. While there are very important human, economic, social and political reasons for pursuing a policy and approach of

inclusive education, it is also a means of total personal development and an environment for cordial relationships among individuals, groups and nations (ibid).

Disability is a concept that is defined in a diversity of ways (Brechin & Liddiard, 1981). It is not possible to have an international and a conclusive definition of it, as the understanding of disability varies in different societies and cultures (ibid). Brechin and Liddiard (1981) reviewed definitions of disability and were able to identify 23 different interpretations. Townsend (1979) identified a number of definitions and divided them into five categories, which were abnormality or loss, medical condition, functional limitation of everyday activities, disability as deviance, and disability as a disadvantage. Disability is isolating in many African communities (see section 2.2) (Townsend, 1979), for example, many people do not come into contact with a person with a disability; only those in the direct environments, such as parents, close family members, or extended families involved in the care for persons with disabilities, deal with a person with a disability on a daily basis (ibid). This leads to a greater isolation of individuals with disabilities (ibid). Consequently, disability is seen as the unfortunate fate of some individuals, making 'mainstream' life unlikely (ibid). It is deemed necessary, and consequently self-evident, that a person no longer really belongs to the community (ibid); therefore, many individuals with a disability are isolated from the mainstream community (ibid).

Terms such as impairment and disability are not unbiased or objective, but contested, and their meanings vary within and across cultures (Helander, 1993). Being impaired does not necessarily mean that someone is disabled, even if the impairment is visible (ibid). For instance, a person who has lost a limb, may continue with his/her life as before, and if fitted with an artificial replacement may not be perceived as being disabled.

Disability definitions are wrought by the models that underpin them (UN, 1983). Some definitions are underpinned by the medical model, while others reflect the social model (UN, 1983). The World Health Organisation's International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (UN, 1983), for example, which is widely used internationally and is not without its critics, is generally considered to reflect a social model, whereby disability is

not the inevitable consequence of impairment, but the result of restrictions stemming from social and physical barriers.

**The Medical Model of Disability** developed in the nineteenth century alongside the establishment of the medical profession and technological advances in medicine (Drake, 1999). People with disabilities were treated by medical professionals with an aim to rehabilitate individuals to cope with normal life. This philosophy focussed on the individual and the individual was seen as a victim whose disability was a personal tragedy (Barnes, 1999). This individual model of disability defines problems that people with disabilities face as a direct consequence of that disability. In this philosophy, the professional's task is to work with the individual. However, this view ignores the fact that there are two angles to consider in disability. Firstly, physical adjustment is required through rehabilitation programmes designed to return the individual to as near normal a state as possible. Secondly, psychological adjustments, which help individuals to come to terms with his/her physical limitations, are needed (Oliver & Sapey, 2006).

**The Social Model of Disability** was developed by a number of scholars and activists such as Oliver, Abberley, Finkelstein and Hunt, who formed the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation in the 1970s to challenge the medical model of disability. This model focuses on the structure of society by looking at the workings of its social structure and the structure of its institutions. It views disability as a product of the social environment, both culturally and historically. This social model does not site disability as being part of an “impaired or malfunctioning body”. The model distinguishes a difference between impairment on the one hand and disability on the other (Marks, 1999; Read, 2000). This model does not view disability as an individual physical thing but as a result of obstacles placed on disability by society (Shakespeare, 2006a). It does not see disability as being negative (i. e. not seeing, not walking) but considers how the environment needs to solve the problems of those with disabilities. The model focuses its attention on aspects of a disabled person’s life that should be supported by society. For example, if a building needs ramps and does not have them, it is

inaccessible to a wheelchair user. Similarly, the visually impaired may need books or signs in Braille. If these are unavailable, the physical environment is inaccessible to the blind.

In general, the medical model of disability is still the main model used in Libya when it comes to legislation and public policy (Al Jundi, 2013; Hagra, 2005). According to Al Jundi (2013), a lack of “clear and actionable legislation” to protect disabled rights is the largest contributing factor to negative social attitudes still held today towards the disabled in Libya. Al Jundi (2013) urges Arab countries to stop using the medical/welfare model which only encourages segregation and move to a social/human rights-based model (which encourages inclusion).

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) asserts that regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.

### **3.5.1 Special Education Needs.**

As most disabled people in Libya have been educated in special, rather than mainstream educational provision (UN, 2005), it is appropriate to review the literature on special education. In the Middle East special needs education began by the introduction of segregated institutions. These institutions, which were largely set up by European Expatriates covered things like the Deaf and Blind Schools in Egypt which operated from 1874-1888. This type of institution continued to be expanded throughout the twentieth century. (Gaad, 2011, p. 4-5). This literature reflects the debates within disability studies. In the UK, special education started in 1791 when the first school for blind people was opened (Hall, 1997). This school, which was more like a workshop than a traditional school, which catered to both children and adults, and offered training in music and handicrafts (ibid). By the 1850s, these schools offered training for employment rather than providing traditional education (ibid). However, by 1886 the Royal Commission for the Blind and Deaf included some purely educational content into the curriculum (ibid). The Commission sought to categorise disabilities so that some people were allowed to attend ordinary schools, while others attended special schools (ibid). By the end of

the 19th century special schools could be found across the UK (ibid). Gadour (2008, p. 76) also holds a similar position. He criticises what he considers is “...one-way, uncritical transfer of knowledge from the West to third world countries”. However, there is no context taken into consideration with this transfer. He goes on to say that the “legacy of cultural imperialism” holds back development, especially in Africa.

The Warnock Report made it clear that by the middle of the nineteenth century, society had found a sense of social conscience regarding the situation of disabled people, especially the blind (Warnock, 1978). However, education at that time was primarily concerned with providing relief for their distress (ibid).

In 1976, the Education Act made provision for integrated education, and while the 1981 Act commended the provisions made in the Act of 1976, it stated that these recommendations were too loose and vague (Hall, 1997). In 1989, certain volunteer organisations were established by the parents of disabled children, and by 1992 a joint enquiry was conducted by the UK government (ibid). In 1993, a new Act of Parliament was put forward, and the White Paper, 'Choice and Diversity', then made the pronouncements of the 1981 Act official (ibid). However, even after all the Acts that called for integrated education, special schools still existed in the UK (ibid).

Barnes (1991) noted that segregation in special schools was influenced by the medical model, which makes education a low priority, and instead attempts to equip people with disabilities with useful skills and opportunities. The medical model is concerned with individuals and focuses on the body (ibid). In such a model, a disease is seen as a definite disturbance of the normal function of the body (ibid). This can be detected by diagnostic instruments or through a chemical analysis of organs, cells or body fluids (Seale & Pattison, 1994). However, this seems to devalue their social role, leading to the creation of negative stereotypes, such as dependence, which then leads to discrimination in society as a whole (Barnes, 1991).

The normalisation approach has been criticised however, because whilst it values the individual, it presents issues in supporting the same individual effectively (Hall, 1997). Conversely, putting people with the same disabilities together in a special needs institution in order to protect them, may, at the same time, suppress an individual's characteristics (Marks, 1999). A study carried out by Liu (2001) in Vietnam showed that in certain areas some parents might not send their children, especially girls, to schools that were not nearby, due to safety considerations.

In the UK, the government is encouraging inclusive provision by focusing on the educational needs of students (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). Students with disabilities should have equal access to and provision of education (ibid). According to legislation in the UK, families may get financial support to take their disabled children outside the UK to receive special education if this service is not available in the UK (Read, 1992). The Salamanca Statement began with a commitment to education for all, recognizing the necessity and urgency of providing education for all children, young people, and adults within the mainstream education system (UNESCO, 1994). The statement states that those children with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools; furthermore, it recommends that all students with special needs have full access in mainstream schools and that they are taught in classrooms using predominantly adaptable pedagogy (UNESCO, 1994).

Special educational needs are an unhelpful term for children with disabilities without an understanding of what it means or who they are (DfES, 2001). In the United Kingdom, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2001, p.6) defines the term special educational needs thus: "...Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them." In order to erase doubts about what learning difficulty is, the code indicates that children have a learning difficulty if they:

- 1) Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;
- 2) Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority; and

- 3) Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (1) or (2) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them. (DfES, 2001, p.6).

The special educational needs code of practice (DfES, 2001) did not classify or categorise various categories of children with Special Educational Needs. However, the UK government's Green Paper on 'Excellence of education' makes the suggestion that children with special educational needs are a readily defined group with common characteristics; the term is sometimes used to include the 3% of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs as well as those children from disadvantaged families (ibid). Children are identified as having special educational needs not on the basis of impairments or medical conditions, but rather the difficulties they experience in school (ibid).

Dyson (2005) points out that since this system of identification lacks objective measures of impairment; around 18% of children in primary schools are identified as having special educational needs. He also regards this system as adding complications. Arguably, by failing to use objective systems for measurement and categorising all needs, it becomes difficult (especially for teachers) to determine various categories of children with special educational needs (ibid). In a study by Pearson (2005) involving three hundred and fifty-four respondents of one cohort of 'Secondary Post Graduate Certificate of Education' (PGCE) students, fewer than 15% identified the following as constituting special educational needs: dyslexia, behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties and sensory impairment. The UK's National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) finds that categorisation thus becomes difficult (ibid). Categorisation, like labelling, has received criticism, since many feel it should not be used (Hunt and Marshall, 2002). It seems that the framers of the special educational needs code of practice (DfES, 2001) recognised the controversies and implications of categorisation (ibid). For example:

- (1) Categorisation does not go well with the concept of inclusion, which has one of its elements as removing barriers and ensuring equal opportunity for all;

- (2) Other factors outside the child could be responsible for the special educational needs;

(3) Some of the special educational needs categories, such as behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; as well as autistic spectrum disorders, may be difficult to define, and

(4) Categorisation has long-term consequences. It indicates further that children rarely fit categorical descriptions of difficulty and that not all disabilities increase special educational needs, nor are all special educational needs a result of a disability. More importantly, categorisation may have no educational relevance (Florian, 2005).

### **3.6 Introduction school culture.**

Promoting an awareness of culture within the school can bring out the best from educators in engaging in activities to prosper growth. School as an organization has its educators standing as the main component. Wheatley and Kellner- Rogers (1996) have studied the “humanness” of organizations. They dare to call organizations as a purposeful collective unit. People within the culture of an organization are “...intelligent, creative, adaptive, self-organizing, and meaning-seeking” (Wheatley & Kellner- Rogers, 1996, p. 3). The authors discuss self-organizing systems as “...creating their own structures, patterns of behaviour and processes for accomplishing. They design what is necessary to do the work. They agree on and relationships that make sense to them.” “...We need places to nurture our passions, places where we can become more. Work is one of those places” (Wheatley & Kellner- Rogers, 1996, p. 63).

Schools whose culture places great emphasis on high educational and pastoral standards are also seen to take a positive stance towards students with disabilities within the school environment (Stoll, 1999). An explanation of school culture and environment appeared during the literature review as major themes for discussion. Each of these themes is presented in turn to provide the literature in a coherent manner.

### **3.6.1 An explanation of school culture.**

Culture is difficult to define and understand as; Hargreaves and Hopkins (2005) have described it as an elusive and intricate notion, a subjective dynamic and a social experience. School culture is one of the most difficult concepts due to the deeper stage of shared basic suppositions and unconscious operating beliefs at its heart. In many Arabic communities there are similarities regarding the concept of disability (Hargreaves et al., 2005). Particularly in rural areas, children with disabilities are seen as less than human, and are thus vulnerable to social or physical abuse (ibid). A few parents are hopeful that a cure or a miracle will “fix” the child (ibid). These attitudes are a result of historical and cultural traditions. On this, Avoke (2002) stated that in the past, disability was strongly attributed to magical or religious models of evil placed on an individual from the gods (p. 770). Parents’ conception of disability as a permanent condition was also reported by Kisanji (1995). He pointed out that some parents did not see any improvement in their children’s functional skills, whilst others made unfavourable comparisons with children without disabilities (Kisanji, 1995). Compared to the West, Arabic cultures have more non-scientific explanations for why children are born with disabilities; they also perceive individuals in terms of fate, religion, and punishments for past misdeeds such as breaking taboos (ibid).

School culture can act as a lens through which to view the practise and action of actors in schools (Stoll, 1999). In addition, it acts as a glue holding everyone together for positive effect on the practices in the school (ibid). According to Deal and Kennedy (1983) each school is viewed as diverse social reality and life mind-set. Stoll (1999, p.33) states that “... school cultures vary. What is particularly interesting, however, is that schools with similar context characteristics have different mind-sets.”

From the anthropological point of view, culture is defined as the customs of a group of people. “...Culture has been treated as a thing; separate from individuals but with power, influence, and even rights over people. It is outside people and does something to them” (Musgrove, 1982, p. 113). Musgrove portrays a historical review of how culture has been defined and comes to the conclusion that, although there is great debate within the field of the precise definition of

culture, the earlier work is barely different from the work of contemporary anthropologists (ibid). For example, in 1947, Linton stated, "...every society has a culture, no matter how simple this culture may be, and every human being is cultured" (p. 48). Musgrove quotes Radcliffe-Brown regarding the impact of culture on humans; "...The presentation of culture is a mighty, independent thing, external to individuals but impinging powerfully upon them. All culture patterns act upon individuals" (Musgrove, 1982, p. 119).

Musgrove's anthropological information supports the notion that individual schools have their own culture supported by their history, folkways, constraints, and rituals. Culture is said to be existing where there is a group of people being present for extended periods of time working towards a common purpose. To understand how a school can possess a distinct culture, one can look into the field of anthropology and discover how and why culture is typically studied.

Other than the science of anthropology, the sociological sector too focuses on the cultures that are ethnically or geographically defined (Griswold, 1994). However, the study of any culture is referred to as "...a group of people who work (or play) together and journey towards a shared meaning and assumption" (Griswold, 1994, p.133). However, Griswold then goes onto to the a contradiction when arguing that "culture" as one of the most difficult words hard to define but frequently used (ibid). Peterson (1979) states that when sociologists talk about culture, they usually mean one of four things: norms, values, beliefs, or expressive symbols. Norms are how people behave in a given society; values are what people hold dear; beliefs are how people think the universe operates and expressive symbols are representations of the culture (ibid). In schools, educators behave in specific ways such as sharing materials with colleagues or interacting with students and family members. School values, or what educators hold dear, may be the appreciation of the hard work that students demonstrate or the care for all children regardless of their background. Educators' beliefs can be analysed as how they find themselves fitting to the school setting or how the school fits into the surrounding community.

In the views of Griswold (1994), American schools are said to be engaging in certain symbolic rituals, such as the preparation of report cards (a cultural object), because the institutional context in which schools find themselves expect an outcome, regardless of the difficulty inherent in measuring learning and educational progress. Schools as a matter of fact tend to form specific cultures to establish a collective identity together to fend off predators and critics (Griswold, 1994).

Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) strongly affirm that the quality of relationships between colleagues is positively associated with commitment and satisfactions. If the people within a school do not connect and work together towards a common goal or passion, the culture is said to be stagnant or unproductive. Lincoln and Kalleberg provide three models of organizations. The consensus model holds shared goals and values within an organization that are the norms and dissidence is a problem requiring correction (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990). The cleavage model has distinct groups within an organization that have different interests, especially fault lines that exist between job levels (ibid). The fragmentation model represents organizations mixed with ambiguity of group or individual perspectives (ibid). It is possible that schools can fall under all three models or have factions of each model within one school (ibid).

Rossmann, Corbett and Firestone (1999) indicated that the shared language played a key role in perceptions of school culture as it affected organisational members. Rossmann et al., (1999) thus recommended the study of shared language to identify the culture of the school. The propositions relating to the shared language are established with members of organisation of the school, so the deep-seated propositions can be studied within long-standing anthropological research, including interviews, focused observation and the researcher partnering with an organisation's members to recognise their underlying propositions systematically (Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999).

School improvement is a goal of research into school culture (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993); the other goal is how leaders guide the school culture (Marshall, 1988). The third goal is the

capacity of school leaders to organise and manage school backgrounds (Hargreaves et al., 2005). Other research has focussed on school culture from the perspective of school reform and organisation of the culture (Sarason, 1996).

Recently, inclusive school culture has been considered as the opportunities for school staff to reflect and possibly reconstruct beliefs and values related to student rights and education will affect how teachers think about schooling, their students, the curriculum and their own teaching approach (Carrington, 1999). For example, Hunt and Goetz, (1997) found, in their analysis of 19 studies on the context and development of successful inclusive schools, that there was a consensus about a set of values and morally driven commitments of children: both influence the characteristics of the school programmes, and are considered to be beneficial for the improvement of inclusive culture.

Zollers et al., (1999) emphasised three underlying features of school culture in their study on the connection between inclusion and school culture. These features comprise of shared language, broad vision of school community, and inclusive leadership.

### **3.6.2 Environment and school culture.**

The school environment is considered as a wider school culture (Hargreaves, 1999); however, the physical environment and the school climate can be the biggest barriers for full inclusion to take effect (Mitchell, 1999). For example, according to Smith, Polloway, Patton and Dowdy (2004), in order for children with disabilities to be given the maximum learning opportunities, a typical inclusive school environment must be developed in ways that foster easy access to classrooms, resource rooms, playing fields, and of course the toilets and the library. This is supported by McNary, Glasgow and Hicks (2005) who argued that the biggest barrier that one could find in inclusive schools is a system that does not accommodate children with disabilities, but rather rejects them. It means that in inclusive settings the classroom organisation, pathways, access-ways and other school facilities must be accessible by children with disabilities, which would ultimately maximize and foster learning (ibid).

Other aspects of the inclusive school environment have also been identified in other studies as being obstacles that have to be dealt with efficiently in order for inclusive programmes to be successfully implemented. For example, Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) talked about overcrowded classrooms, insufficiently pre-prepared materials, differentiated packages, insufficient time to plan with the learning support team, lack of modified and flexible timetables, inadequate support available from external specialists and lack of mainstream in-service training opportunities as being some of the obstacles that contributed to teachers forming various mind-sets towards inclusive educational practices. Moreover, the need for more non-contact time, so that teachers can plan collaboratively, has been stressed in a number of American studies (Diebold & von Eschenbach, 1991; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar (1991). In the Myles and Simpson (1989) investigation, for example, 48 out of 55 teachers (87.2 percent) reported a perceived need for one hour or more of daily planning time for inclusion. It could be said that mainstream education teachers feel that implementing an inclusive education programme would involve a considerable workload on their part, as a result of increased planning for meeting the needs of a very diverse population (Clough, & Corbett, 2000; Peterson & Hittie, 2003). In this respect, human and physical support can be seen as important factors in generating positive actions and practices among mainstream education teachers towards the inclusion of children with disabilities (Clough et al., 2000).

School culture has been linked to effective inclusive schools (Ainscow, 1995; Alton-Lee, 2003; Carrington, 1999; Dyson, Farrell, Polat, Hutcheson & Gallanaugh, 2004). School culture is a very complex phenomenon and has been noted to be an intricate and illusive notion (Prosser, 1999), a social experience (Corbett, 1999), pluralistic, subjective and dynamic term (Rossman, Corbett & Firestone, 1999). School culture is often used interchangeably with terms such as school climate, ethos, atmosphere or character, and these terms are assumed to denote a common phenomenon (Prosser, 1999).

Each school develops its own unique culture based upon the traditions, philosophy and aims underpinning the school and the way in which these are then translated into daily school

practice (Deal & Kennedy, 1983; Stoll, 1999). Structures, policies, perceptions, attitudes and practices are all affected by inclusive thinking (Carrington, 1999; Thomas 1985). Inclusive education emphasizes the building of cohesive cultures around values and practices that respect difference (Prosser, 1999). School culture is about shared language (Rossman, Corbett & Firestone, 1999). Subsequently, shared language is the understanding that emerges from the interactions of a given group (Cresswell, 2005), and is noticeable by behaviour and practice (Rossman, Corbett & Firestone, 1999). To gain an understanding of a school's culture one needs to study the shared language together with the assumptions of the members of staff (ibid). These assumptions can be studied through "... long-term anthropological research, consisting of focused observation, interviews, and the collaboration of the researcher with the members of an organisation to systematically identify their underlying assumptions." (Zollers et al., 1999, p.160).

School culture is also based upon the organisational set-up of a school, together with the value systems, beliefs, and personal experiences that each individual brings to the school. Carrington and Elkins (2005) reported that in their study, inclusive schools blurred the lines between disabled and non-disabled students and special and mainstream provisions, whilst non-inclusive schools perpetuated medical model thinking, and maintained rigid teaching methods and school structures. When individuals do not support a philosophy, it is challenging to encourage these individuals to shift beliefs (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2002; Radtke, 2003). Including disabled students in mainstream schools requires a complete change in the thinking of teachers (Carrington et al., 2005). Schein (1985) suggests that cultures are about the fundamental levels of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation operating unconsciously to define how they view themselves and their working contexts. These values relate to the extent to which they include the acceptance and celebration of difference and commitment to offering educational opportunities to all students. These values also relate to the extent to which they are shared across a school staff team and to the extent to which students are enabled to participate (Kugelmass, 2001).

Hargreaves (1997) focuses on successful school cultures. Openness, informality, care, attentiveness, lateral working relationships, reciprocal collaboration, candid and vibrant dialogue, and a willingness to face uncertainty together are the qualities of the members of school cultures. He asserts that the emotional climate of a building is directly tied to the school's culture (ibid). Researchers such as Fullan (1991), Rosenholtz (1989) are looking at the culture of schools to determine why some schools are progressive, welcoming, effective, and reform minded while others are not. They recon the leadership of the school administrator(s) has a great deal in making each school culture distinctive. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) use the concept of "culture" to refer to the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates, particularly in reference to how people relate (or fail to relate) to each other. In simple terms, culture is "...the way we do things around here" (p. 37).

Cunningham and Gresso (1993) came up with a view that the impact of school leaders contributed to the recognition of school culture to a great extent. They defined effective school cultures as those that accomplished achievements through a collective vision.

"...All schools have cultures; strong or weak, functional or dysfunctional. Successful schools seem to have strong and functional cultures aligned with a vision of excellence in schooling....strong, functional cultures must be nourished, nurtured and supported through the correlates of cultural development" (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993, p. 50).

Change is the key idea of all correlating views and definitions on school cultures. Fullan (1991) hints at the link in *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (1991). He looks to find meaning in change: "...if reforms are to be successful, individuals and groups must find meaning concerning what should change as well as how to go about it" (Fullan, 1991, p. xi). He categorically ; "...Reform is not putting into place the latest policy...It means changing the cultures of the classrooms, schools, districts, universities, and so on" (Fullan,1991,p. xii).

Shaw and Reyes (1992) saw no single "...comprehensive organizational theory that fully explains the complexity of the school as a social organization." (p. 295). They studied the commitments and organizational values of educators at both elementary and secondary levels. They sought to examine the aspects of the complexity of the school organization from a cultural

perspective (ibid). Kroeber and Kluckhorn (1968) were anthropologists who cited 164 different definitions of culture. The definitions ranged from simple to complex. Shaw and Reyes (1992) could list out differences in culture across schools based on levels of commitment, value system and the relationship between the two.

Barth (1990) sees change and the concept of school improvement as an endless list of characteristics that attempt to make an “effective principal”, “effective teacher” and an “effective school”. In order to bring out the best of school improvement, he recommends for a situation where both children and adults learn simultaneously, think critically, solve problems important to them, and become a true community of learners where learning is endemic and mutually visible. Change or improvement is a mutual achievement (ibid).

Barth (1990) proposes building communities of learners in schools to open up the idea of school culture. He holds four assumptions: (1) Schools have the capacity to improve themselves, if the conditions are right, (2) Adults and students alike learn and each energizes and contributes to the learning of the other, (3) What needs to be improved about schools is their culture, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and the nature and quality of learning experiences, and (4) School improvement is an effort to determine and provide conditions under which the adults and students will promote and sustain growth among themselves. “...Taking these assumptions seriously leads to some fresh thinking about the culture of schools and about what people do in them” (Barth,1990, p. 45).

Embracing this inclusive culture depends on the process of dialogue, collaboration, reviewing and refining current teaching and learning processes (Dyson, 2006). Such a conceptualization means that inclusion cannot be divorced from the contexts within which it is developing, nor the social relations that might sustain or limit that development (Dyson, 2006). In fact, an inclusive culture is the sharing of ideas from all perspectives, where students, teachers and parents, work and learn together, despite differences, to create success for a common cause and where difference of thought and opinions is respected (ibid).

### **3.7 Inclusive Education and Teaching.**

The literature talks about different factors and practices that influence inclusive education. However, for the success of inclusive education, teachers and school-related factors and practices have appeared to greatly influence how children with disabilities are included in mainstream schools. For this reason, the following sections will talk about how these five aspects influence inclusive practices.

#### **3.7.1 Inclusive learning and Teacher attitudes.**

One of the most important arguments in opposition to the inclusion of disabled students in the mainstream schools is that there are already some difficulties facing the meeting of mainstream students' needs in these schools (Neilson, 2005; Smith et al., 2008). The reason for this is the large class sizes, lack of facilities and resources, and untrained teachers (ibid). In addition, implementation of integrated education becomes more difficult because of the emphasis of academic programmes, on examination and rote learning (ibid). Another barrier to serving students is the lack of staff able to supply disabled students with quality inclusive services (Arbeiter &Hartley, 2002).

Vaughan and Hogg (2002) define attitudes as the basic aspects of human life that enable human beings to analyse and react to any events, make decisions and interacting with people. Semi (2008) also pointed out that attitudes are thoughts, feelings and actions that human beings have about other people and things they encounter in their daily lives, and can guide them in deciding whether or not they like or dislike someone or something. It can be a positive or negative evaluation of something that can influence us to act in a certain way towards that particular thing (ibid). Teachers' attitudes play an important role in implementing the inclusive education policies in regular schools (Frost, 2002).

According to O'Brien (2001, p.42):

“...The inside of a teacher's head is the key resource for inclusion because the starting point for inclusive learning begins when teachers reflect upon how they create educational reality”.

Despite the school's support, e.g. physical, speech and language support, teaching assistants, special units and professional support, teachers' attitudes can vary between acceptance and rejection (Tilstone & Rose, 2003). The narrow-minded approaches of certain teachers can cause a discomfort for the children with special needs in the regular classroom and thus inclusion may not see the programmed result (ibid).

General and special educators had been studied interviewed over the years, based on their attitudes towards inclusive education to predict the result of inclusive education (Kitchen, 2007). Researchers pointed out that teacher attitudes are an important factor in the education of children with special needs (Frost, 2002; Moore, Anderson, Timperley, Glynn, Macfarlane, Brown, & Thomson, 1999). According to Pearce (2008), attitudes are even more important than knowledge and skills and claimed that a positive attitude is the most crucial factor in becoming an inclusive teacher. Wang (2008) also upholds attitude as a deciding part of successful inclusion and further states that in order for inclusion to be successful,

“...regular teachers need to have positive attitudes towards children with disabilities as their beliefs and attitudes will influence their classroom behaviours, students' behaviours as well as students learning outcomes and teacher performance” (Wang, 2008, p. 76).

Kitchen's (2007) literature review shows that teachers who were positive towards inclusive education had a positive effect on students' learning while those with negative attitudes limited the opportunities of students with disabilities in a regular class. According to Mentis, Quinn and Ryba (2005), “...teachers who have positive attitudes about inclusive education accept students with special needs into their classroom” (p.56). Tilton (1996) also states that a teacher in an inclusive classroom needs a strong positive attitude in order to cast out the initial fear and incomprehension to discover the benefits of the inclusive classroom.

According to Spedding (2005), negative teacher attitudes are seen as one of the significant barriers toward inclusive learning by disabled students. These attitudes are of extreme importance as they determine the way they behave towards and teach disabled students in their classroom. Spedding also says that teacher's attitudes seem to differ from their awareness of

the particular disability. In addition, disabled students are often ignored in class as a result of teachers feeling that they are not responsible for teaching them.

Teachers are a source of societal improvement and education changes; as a result, it is crucial for teachers to appreciate and acknowledge the diversity that exists in the class, and that disabled students require acceptance and recognition, rather than being marginalised or punished (Neilson, 2005).

Pivik, McCommas and La Flamme (2002) state that disabled students are often segregated from the rest of the class as a result of teachers believing that they require a higher degree of management and physical care, over and above the basic education requirement. This factor has major effects on the inclusion of disabled students in school (Neilson, 2005).

Teachers' attitudes seem to have a more powerful effect on disabled children in the schools, than technical knowledge, or the availability of resources of specialised teaching strategies (Arbeiter & Hartley, 2002). Moreover, high expectations and full involvement of disabled students in their daily activities in the classroom were expected from teachers who have positive attitudes (ibid). It is crucial for teachers to reflect on their practices, and to constantly improve them; in addition, more reflective and positive attitudes from teachers can lead to more disabled children thriving in mainstream settings (Neilson, 2005).

According to Loreman, Forlin and Sharma (2007) willingness and attitudes of the teachers at school have an impact on the success of inclusion; especially attitudes that welcome and involve disabled students in their classrooms in significant way. Additionally, teachers with positive attitudes have a positive impact on the attitude of mainstream students toward disabled students (Loreman et al., 2007).

Studies in the social-cognitive field have shown that a teacher's beliefs, attitudes, actions and practices towards student diversity and heterogeneity play a major part when including all children into the mainstream education system (Silva & Morgado, 2004). In particular, research suggests that some teachers possess low academic expectations in relation to children with disabilities (ibid). In a study by Aloia, Maxwell and Aloia (1981), teachers' impressions of the intellectual potential of a child who was labelled as 'mentally retarded' were lower than for children with no special needs requirements. This was partly due to the teachers' personal experiences as well as their perceptions, whereby such children were thought to be lacking appropriate social and academic behavioural patterns (Aloia et al., 1981). In another study, Mushoriwa (2001) assumed that teacher attitudes can affect the way they perceive, value, judge, interact with, and teach visually impaired children in mainstream classrooms. In other research, it was found that teachers' perceptions and actions can shape the way inclusive education is promoted (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). In their studies these researchers further observed that, generally speaking in many countries, the introduction of inclusive education precedes 'reality checking studies' to establish what is actually happening in regards to including everyone into the mainstream education system (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). However, Mushoriwa (2001) proposed that there is a likely danger of being carried away by theoretical ideas rather than being practical, which actually ensures that all children are accorded the same social status for full inclusion.

A study in Australia on teachers' attitudes, actions and practices towards inclusive education found that teachers were more positive about students whose programmes focussed on social inclusion, than those requiring physical changes in their school or classroom (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). The same teachers were also more accepting of students with physical disabilities than those that required academic modifications to suit their needs (ibid). Such research indicates that the types of disability and the demands they eventually make on the teacher, would influence teachers' actions and practices towards including a child with such a special need in a mainstream class (Mushoriwa, 2001). This negatively affected the children's learning and development. Thus, it was established that if it is not carefully thought about, and if teachers do not take necessary steps to change their actions and practices, as well as the attitudes and actions of other pupils towards children with disabilities, inclusion may result in

drawing attention to the child as having a disability rather than mitigating inclusion (Mushoriwa, 2001).

According to Panda (1991), who examined the actions and practices of 100 mainstream classroom teachers towards various types of disabilities in the State of Orissa in India, teachers were generally negatively disposed towards children with epileptic disorders, emotional disturbance, and moderate and severe mental retardation (ibid). These results suggest that prior to teaching, teachers' views, perceptions and actions need to be considered, and they must be given adequate training in how to cater for the needs of children with disabilities in the mainstream classrooms (ibid).

Another American study by Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher & Saumell (1996) examined mainstream and special education teachers' perceptions of inclusion through the use of focus group interviews. The majority of these teachers, who at the time of the study were participating in inclusive programmes, had strong negative feelings about inclusion, and felt that decision-makers were out of touch with classroom realities (ibid). The teachers within the study identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion; these included class size, inadequate resources, the extent to which all students would benefit from inclusion and lack of adequate teacher training and preparation (ibid).

Perhaps the most widely examined factor related to inclusive teaching is the teacher's attitudes and evaluations toward inclusive teaching (Frost, 2002). Overall, it would appear that teachers believe that diversity has a positive effect on schools and in the classroom (Vaughn, et al., 1996). For example, Maruyama & Moreno (2000) found that 70% of the teachers they surveyed believed that diversity in schools gives students the opportunity to explore new perspectives. When asked about the effects of diversity in their classes, half of the teachers believed that diversity broadened the variety of shared experiences (ibid). Teachers were also more likely to report that diversity in the classroom allows students to confront stereotypes about social, political, racial, and ethnic issues and personal experiences (ibid). Other teachers have reported positive outcomes and reasons for teaching about diversity, such as, to increase awareness,

education, and tolerance for all humans (Simoni, Sexton-Radek, Yescavage, Richard & Lundquist, 1999).

### **3.7.2 Teaching experiences within inclusive education.**

Teaching experience is another teacher-related variable cited by several studies as having an influence on the teachers' actions and practices (Berryman, 1989; Cough & Linsay, 1991). Berryman (1989), Cough & Linsay (1991) established that younger teachers and those with fewer years of teaching experience were found to be more supportive towards inclusive education. Forlin's (1995) study, for example, showed that acceptance of a child with physical disability was the highest among teachers with fewer than six years teaching experience, and declined with experience for those with six to ten years of teaching. The most experienced teachers with greater than eleven years of teaching experience were the least accepting for children with disabilities to be included in the mainstream classrooms (Forlin, 1995). Forlin (1995) also obtained a similar result for the inclusion of a child with intellectual disability. His study seemed to indicate that as teachers gained more experience in teaching, they became less accepting of inclusive educational practices (Forlin, 1995). Leyser, Kapperman, & Keller (1994) also found that in general, teachers with 14 years or fewer teaching experience had a significantly higher positive score in their responses to inclusion compared to those with more than fourteen years. Leyser, Kapperman, & Keller (1994) found no significant differences in teacher responses to inclusion among teachers whose teaching experience was between one and four years, five and nine years and ten and 14 years.

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were influenced by their training, knowledge and experience in teaching children with disabilities (Forlin, 2008). Teachers' pre- and in-service training are of paramount importance in gaining knowledge about children with disabilities and improve their attitude (ibid). Authors like Kitchen (2007) and Forlin (2008) also assert that teachers' attitudes are certainly shaped in part during initial training. Therefore, Jimenez and Graf (2008) recommended that appropriate training and support would increase the confidence of teachers in their ability to teach students of all abilities and would ensure positive attitudes. One study (Mapea, 2006) undertaken in Papua New Guinea, investigating teachers' views on

providing for children with special needs in inclusive classrooms, found that teachers who had some training in inclusive education had positive attitudes towards inclusion.

According to Kitchen (2007), people who experience high levels of interaction with individuals who have disabilities possess more positive attitudes and feeling for them. For instance, the Mapea (2006) study noted variables like having a family member with a disability influenced teachers to seek further training in specific areas of inclusion (e.g., sign language) to help in their relative's learning.

Parasuram (2006) conducted a similar study in India to analyse the variables that affect teachers' attitudes towards disability and inclusive education. The study investigated possible variables such as age, gender, length of teaching experience, teacher qualifications, and extent of association with a person with a disability, income level and teaching position (ibid). The analysis revealed that while some of the variables of interest did affect teachers' attitudes towards disabilities and inclusion, the only variable that affected most of the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion was prior association with a person with a disability (ibid). Teachers who have previously dealt with children with disabilities were positive and who have not, seemed rather negative (ibid). Consequently, this study also concluded that prior association with a person with a disability had a positive impact on the teacher's attitudes (ibid).

Teachers should provide an effective and stimulating educational environment for all pupils equally towards implementing inclusive education in classrooms. In addition, teachers' experience and their training significantly influence their attitudes (Meng, 2008; Leatherman & Niemeier, 2005). Despite the fact that it is essential to staff inclusive classes with skilled and trained teachers, there is a shortage of inclusive teacher training programmes. This is a major problem to be solved if the quota of trained teachers is to be met in Libya (Hossain, 2004; Kibria, 2005). Adequately trained professionals are required for students with special needs (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). In addition, support personnel for training programmes such as audiologists, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, communication support

workers and interpreters are very scarce in many developing countries (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002).

Another study by Harvey (1985) compared the willingness of teacher trainees and primary teachers to accept children with special education needs in their classrooms. His findings indicated that there was a clear reluctance on the part of the more experienced primary teachers compared to teacher trainees in their willingness to include such children (Harvey, 1985). In this respect, it would not be unreasonable to assume that newly qualified teachers hold positive views towards inclusion when entering inclusive educational settings (*ibid*). However, although the above study indicated that those young teachers, and those with fewer years of experience, are more supportive of inclusive education programmes, other investigators have reported that teaching experience was not significantly related to teachers' attitudes, actions and practices (Avramidis et al., 2000; Leyser, Volkan & Ilan 1989;).

The organisation for economic co-operation and development (OECD), went on to explain that the requirements of a professional instructor need to be derived from the purposes of the students, and that broad professional standards and collective knowledge of what is viewed as effective teaching must be made available (OECD, 2010). Operti & Brady (2011) further explained that there is a need for a teacher's profile to include strong subjective knowledge, pedagogical skills, the ability to work effectively with a wide range of students and colleagues, ability to promote the school and the profession, and the ability to engage in continuous development.

Inclusive pedagogic practices and tools imply (amongst other things), a diversion from overloading students with theoretical and formal academic knowledge towards more attention on effective student involvement and learning (Operti & Brady, 2011). This means that instructors have the ability to create an effective, flexible and significant range of goals, methods, media, activities, and assessment (*ibid*). It could involve cooperative teaching and learning, collaborative problem solving, mixed-ability groups, and individual education plans

designed to correspond to other curricula, alongside cognitive instruction, self-regulated and memory learning, multi-level teaching, competency-based approaches, and interactive, digital teaching tools (Corbett, 2001). The study by Avramidis et al., (2000) which involved 81 primary and secondary instructors, measured teacher approaches as regards to inclusion of individual differences of students in classrooms. The study revealed that experienced teachers handling individual differences of students exhibited a more positive attitude than those without experience, though both groups had been observed to have a very limited approach to handling students with reasonable to severe learning problems (ibid). Cook (2002) in his studies of 181 pre-service instructors found that there is more positive attention given to students with learning deficiency than those with mental retardation, behaviour disorders, or behavioural problems. Cook's (2002) analysis of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of pre-service instructors conclude that partaker's abilities are dependent on their individual dispositions and skill in engaging students, though the inability is based on experience, training, and instructional knowledge. This conclusion corresponded with that of McDonnell, Mathot-Buckner, Thorson & Fister (2001), emphasized the hindrances faced by instructors in the process of enrolling students with high special requirements. McDonnell et al. (2001) discovered that if adequate training and opportunities are given to instructors to experience working with students with moderate to severe special requirements; it results in a more positive attitude in their ability to manage inclusion. The involvement of a variety of students in the same classroom tends to be easier when teachers are equipped with adequate skills that give them the ability to manage diverse curriculums and different accommodation (ibid). Edwards, Carr & Siegel, (2006) explained that reducing the challenges faced by instructors could be achieved through changing their training from a one-size-fits-all approach, to a model that reflected diversity within the classroom.

Burke & Sutherland (2004) carried out research which focused on the knowledge and experience of teachers in a private college in Brooklyn, New York, and at a public elementary school in Queens Village, New York. The numbers of teachers were arbitrarily picked to fill in a 12-item Likert scale survey to decide approaches relating to the knowledge of inclusive education, instructional practices, and their preparation to teach inclusion, attitudes about individual differences between students, and the concept of inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). During the analysis of results, teachers admitted to having poor knowledge of special

education, though they also showed limited conviction in the positivity of inclusion for some students with special requirements (ibid). The study showed some components which correspond with earlier studies in relation to practicing teachers (Avramidis, et al., 2000; Cook, Cameron & Tankersley, 2007; Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006).

### **3.7.3 Training experiences and strategies in inclusive education.**

Another factor which has attracted considerable attention is the knowledge about children with disabilities gained through formal studies (Mentis, et al., 2005). Buell, Hallam, McCormick & Scheer (1999) argue that one of the main factors in serving students in an inclusive programme is the lack of teachers prepared to supply inclusive services to those students. Many teachers are deficient in their knowledge of exceptional and special needs students, thus, they are insufficiently prepared to teach them (Opdal, Wormnaes & Habayeb, 2001). It seems that an extreme demand for both in-service and pre-service training sustains the growth of inclusive teaching programmes (ibid). Inclusive education policy advises that all teacher training institutions should integrate inclusive education papers inside their core training approach (Wylie, 2000). It has been recommended that personnel should be trained on the specific requirements of the students, and should be given assistance on optimal teaching schemes, adapted material and learning activities, highlighting the importance of professional development (Wylie, 2000). In Jordan, a review of teachers' pre-service education programmes showed that they do not provide appropriate training on skills needed to work in inclusive settings (Amr, 2011).

According to O'Brian and Ryba (2005), without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of children with disabilities, attempts to include these children in mainstream schools would be difficult. The importance of teacher training in the formation of positive views and actions towards inclusion was supported by the findings of Beh-Pajooh (1992), and Shimman (1990), which was based on teachers in colleges. Both studied the views of college teachers in the United Kingdom (UK) towards students with disabilities and their inclusion into ordinary college courses (ibid). Their findings showed that college lecturers who had been trained to teach children with learning difficulties expressed more favourable attitudes and

emotional reactions to students with disabilities and their inclusion, than those who had no such training (Beh-Pajooch, 1992 & Shimman, 1990). Several other studies conducted in the USA (Van-Reusen, Shoho & Barker, 2000; Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer, 1999;), in Australia, and the UK (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000) tend to reinforce the view that special education qualifications acquired from pre-service and in-service courses, were associated with less resistance in inclusive practices. That means teacher training and preparation plays a major role in fostering positive views about the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (Beh-Pajooch, 1992 & Shimman, 1990). Dickens-Smith (1995) also studied the perceptions of both mainstream and special educators towards inclusion. Her respondents were given an attitude survey before and after the development of the teacher training programme (ibid). Both groups of respondents revealed more favourable views towards inclusion after their in-service training than they did before, with mainstream education teachers showing the strongest positive views (ibid). Dickens-Smith (1995) subsequently concluded that staff development through training and other support opportunities is key to the success of inclusive education practices.

Destefano, Shriner and Lloyd (2001) endeavoured to test the effectiveness of an intervention with teachers and school administrators to improve decision making regarding participation and accommodation for students with disabilities in large-scale assessments in a mainstream school. Involving more than 80 teachers, the study assessed the impact of training on teachers' knowledge and confidence about participation and accommodation (ibid). These include accommodation decisions for hypothetical students and actual accommodation decisions for the following year (ibid). The results indicated that after training, there was a stronger relationship between participation/accommodation, curriculum, and instructional needs (ibid). Teachers expressed high confidence in their ability to make accommodation decisions after training (ibid). It can be said that teachers who accept responsibility for teaching a wide diversity of students come to understand the contribution their teaching has on the students' progress (ibid). Thus, Stanovich and Jordan (1998) stated that teachers were assumed to have felt confident in their instructional and management skills, which is a result of appropriate training programmes tailored to meet the challenges associated with inclusive education programmes.

According to the study carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2010, large numbers of trained instructors are not adequately prepared to teach different students in the classroom and almost 50% of the teachers surveyed requested for additional training to be able to handle students, diverse socio-cultural upbringing and the need for multicultural education (OECD, 2010). In some countries such as Malaysia, and Brazil; between 70% and 75% of teachers acknowledged the necessity for additional professional improvement to teach in varied multicultural settings (ibid). In Spain, Iceland, Ireland, Mexico, and Malta, between 50% and 60% of teachers requested additional training on varied multicultural settings; whilst in Denmark, Poland, Australia and Belgium, the percentage alternated between 20% and 30% (ibid).

Friend (2008) explained that the problem of collaborative relationships between educators was difficult due to the fact that their roles were previously distinct. From his explanation this created a tradition of separate goals (ibid), but in the era of inclusive education, there is a need for the corporation of teachers to redefine their duties so as to sustain a successful learning environment for every student (Giangreco and Doyle, 2007). Gut, Oswald, Leal, Frederiksen & Gustafson (2003) pointed out that the study of the relationship between educators should be carried out in the process of teacher training, during which time, instructors are given the chance to interrelate to appreciate what effective teamwork could achieve.

#### **3.7.4 Classroom management and inclusive education.**

A teacher should use inclusive instructional strategies for all students to be included (Smith et al., 2004). These strategies may include peer tutoring, use of computer technology, cooperative learning and different instruction; these strategies are confirmed to be successful for students with all disabilities (ibid). Inclusive classrooms demand that attention is paid to how teachers manage and organise their classrooms. When including disabled students alongside their non-disabled peers, teachers must review their strategies and plan to meet the diverse range of abilities not only of the disabled student, but all students in their class (McNary et al. 2005).

For effective teaching and learning to materialise, teachers must execute appropriate management strategies, which include the application of appropriate behaviour management techniques, curriculum modifications and the use of inclusive teaching strategies, which are non-discriminatory and age appropriate (ibid).

According to Dukmak (2010) the way students act in class is influenced by students' homes, neighbourhoods and culture. The differences can also be due to cultural factors, different types of learning experience or even gender and teaching methods. Dukmak also pointed to another influential factor in classroom interaction in addition to gender and this is the style of communication of the teacher.

Many teaching methods and strategies must be incorporated by teachers to provide a range of chances for students to incorporate in the learning procedure (Smutny, 2003). Separated instruction deals with personal needs and alters instruction to fit the abilities and level of experience of every student in the class (ibid). In addition, in order to be successful, students require options as how to engage in classroom activities (ibid).

As stated by Peterson and Hittie (2003), computer technology can help all students equally and motivate students to participate actively, as well as containing different learning methods. Moreover, computer software can offer a non-judgemental forum for disabled students to practice and study, and whether the student needs one or one hundred exercises (ibid). In inclusive classrooms where students with disabilities are accepted and taught along with their peers, teachers' actions and practices towards how they manage and organise their classrooms and instructional strategies play a vital role in meeting students' learning needs (Schmidt & Harriman, 1998). It is a challenging experience for teachers in inclusive classrooms to ensure that the way they manage their classrooms and the types of instructional strategies they employ, foster learning opportunities for children with disabilities (ibid). According to McNary et al. (2005), this is particularly important because with the inclusion of all children with various ability levels, teachers must plan to meet individual needs. Some of the areas that can be

targeted include curriculum content acquisition, behavioural patterns and a range of associated characteristics (Gargiulo, 2003). However, Schmidt and Harriman (1998) argued that learning in inclusive classrooms must be underpinned by teachers' actions and practices towards employing appropriate management strategies. This is supported by Smith, Polloway, Patton, & Dowdy (2004), who state that "...classroom management is a systematic designing of the classroom environment to create conditions in which effective teaching and learning can occur." (p. 414). In the views of Idol (2002) this can be achieved through the application of appropriate behaviour management procedures, curriculum adaptation and the use of appropriate teaching strategies.

Garriott, Miller and Snyder, (2003) carried out an analysis on the perception of 239 teachers on the appropriateness of settings for students with individual differences. The result of the study showed an equal division of attitudes between capabilities to teach and perceived achievements for students with individual differences (ibid). Almost half of the teachers, who reported their ability to manage students with individual differences in classroom, could offer positive experiences for student self-esteem and academic success, while the others expressed their inabilities as regards to inadequate preparation and the suitability of an inclusive classroom, which involves meeting the requirements of students with different needs (ibid).

The wide range of students with different abilities in the same classroom demands improved and effective resources. Simple teaching resources that could normally be produced locally, such as maps, charts and other illustrative devices are not available in many educational institutions in developing countries (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). Scarcity of teaching materials and facilities obstructs the implementation of inclusive education (Charema, 2007; Kristensen, Loican-Omagor, Onen, 2003; Stubbs, 2002).

Compared to developed countries, developing countries have larger sizes of classrooms which are why teachers feel the pressure of managing and treating every pupil equally (Chhabra, Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010; Ali, Mustapha & Jelas, 2006). In Libya at primary level, most

of the schools have 35-45 students in the same classroom (Ali, Mustapha & Jelas, 2006). This unmanageable capacity of the classrooms puts teachers under pressure making teachers reluctant to pay extra attention to special educational needs children in mainstream classrooms.

Kowalski's (2000) last two negative evaluations of inclusive teaching deal with issues of resistance. Students who value a diversified education view inclusive professors as more knowledgeable, enthusiastic about the material, and open-minded; whereas, students who do not value this educational view their inclusive faculty as biased (ibid). Many professors believe these students will resist coverage of diversity issues (Simoni, Sexton-Radek, Yescavage, Richard & Lundquist, 1999) in the form of silence, absenteeism, or verbal and written complaints (Higginbotham, 1996). It is also worth noting that these behaviours are not limited to white, straight, upper class, able males as many might suspect (Higginbotham, 1996).

For all students to be included, teachers need to use inclusive instructional strategies (Mentis, Quinn & Ryba, 2005; Smith et al., 2004; Peterson & Hittie, 2003). Teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, differentiated instruction and the use of computer technology are some well-researched teaching strategies that are proven to be very effective for students with all disabilities (ibid). According to Smutny (2003), teachers need to incorporate a variety of teaching techniques or pedagogical strategies that provide students with a variety of opportunities to engage in the cooperative learning process. Cooperative learning is regarded as one of the best teaching strategies for students with disabilities. Jolliffe (2007) states that with cooperative learning, students are required to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning and that of others. He adds that with cooperative learning, friendships between peers can be established and maintained, and there is a greater sense of belonging and mutual support (ibid). He further adds that morale amongst students also improves and there is greater independence and increased self-confidence as students achieve (ibid).

According to Bauer and Shea (1999), peer tutoring and support are forms of peer mediated instruction in which peers serve as instruction agents or helpers. They say that one of the main advantages of peer tutoring is that it creates a more favourable pupil-teacher ratio especially in a large class of thirty to forty students, and it also increases the amount of time students spend on a task (ibid). Bauer and Shea (1999) further add that with peer tutoring, students with disabilities have more opportunities to interact with peers without disabilities and have more access to teacher student discussions, worksheets and workbooks, written tasks and projects. Peer mediated instruction also allows students to motivate their peers to contribute their best performance to complete tasks and also uses procedures such as frequent error identification, immediate feedback and peer encouragement to ensure success (Allington, 1994; Mentis, et al., 2005).

Differentiated instruction is also identified as one of the instructional strategies that best meet the needs of students with disabilities. According to Smutny (2003), differentiated instruction addresses individual needs and adjusts instruction to fit the skills and experience level of each student in a classroom. He says that students need choices as to how they will engage in classroom activities in order to be successful (ibid). Tomlinson (1999) agrees that when students take ownership of their learning, they become more involved and take control by using their individual learning styles to access information, interpret material and demonstrate what they have learned.

In the views of Peterson and Hittie (2003), computer technology has the ability to help all learners participate equally, accommodate different learning styles, and can motivate students to participate actively in learning at their own pace. They also add that computer software programs offer students with disabilities a non-judgemental forum for study and practice, and whether the student requires one exercise or one hundred exercises, the computer remains neutral (ibid).

Teachers can distinguish content (what exactly each student learns), processes (how each student learns) and products (what the student produces as evidence of learning) (Tilstone, Florian & Rose, 1998). Furthermore, teachers could take into consideration and distinguish in regards to students' present abilities, their interests and the methods they learn best - i.e., learning method or intellectual strengths that are stronger for a student or even take into consideration what individual are learning about brain function (Sternberg, 1998; Gardner, 1985). When principles of differentiation are joined with meaningful curriculum design, classrooms become active (and yes, sometimes noisier); productive work environments are focused on learning and outcome (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). The curriculum is considered as a factor that hinders the rate of learning and development in the classroom (ibid). The curriculum is seen as the main anchor for the education and framing system (ibid). It mirrors the values and principles of our democratic society (Tomlinson, 1999). Thus it may be seen as the engine that should drive the values and principles espoused by our society (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). There is therefore a need to create a flexible curriculum that will accommodate every student in the classroom so as not to cause learning breakdown.

It is important to reconsider the task of improving inclusive teachers from a curricular point of view (Moreno, 2008). This kind of idea will lead to the consideration of curricular content, process and result, along with curricular design and management (ibid). The compound connections between curricula and the achievement of both equity and quality have been specifically recognised (ibid). According to UNESCO (2009) the inclusive curriculum has been noted as the major route in which principles of inclusion could be set into motion in an education system, and as an effective method for accepting cultural, religion, gender, and other differences. Through this point of view, the curriculum should be acknowledged as an effective tool and mirror of the complex boundaries of society, politics and education, giving, for instance, inside the political and policy deliberations, treaties and developmental policies within different stakeholders a method for promoting understanding and including different viewpoints (ibid).

### **3.7.5 Inclusive curriculum.**

This is an important factor for successful inclusion of disabled students in mainstream school (Smith et al., 2008). This curriculum must be responsive to the requirements of students with special needs, and should assist in cooperation with mainstream peers (ibid), in addition, the curriculum is a method of enhancing emotional, social and progress of all students (Quinn & Ryba, 2005).

A curriculum could be explained as a cultural artefact which symbolizes a set of options regarding the knowledge and values that should, in due course, be passed in order to preserve the community that owns such values (Nunan, George, & McCausland, 2000). As a cultural artefact it symbolizes power, and what remains of a curriculum describes a lot about the values held by those who have less power (ibid). Values and ideology are contained within the curriculum and it is believed that people that partake in the curriculum share these (ibid). Curriculum can be defined in many ways. Rose (2008) defines curriculum as all the "...formal and informal learning opportunities provided by the school" (p. 195). Hoskins (1996) thinks that the curriculum required for inclusion is not confined to paper and pencil. It involves a wide diversity of forms. Therefore, curriculum for the inclusion has to be framed in such a way that it includes the subject taught, teaching pupils receive, the school environment and extra-curricular activities (UNESCO, 2001).

It was formerly believed that there had to be a common set of educational experiences provided for all students through a common curriculum (Rose, 2008). Therefore, many countries in the world adapt inclusive curriculum to be used in their educational institutions (ibid). The object of the adapting inclusive curriculum was to all students with fair and equal learning opportunities in any educational institutions (ibid). For example, in Libya the curriculum is based on the premise that the individual student is at the centre of all teaching and learning programmes, and schools must ensure that this principle is embodied in their programmes (Mitchell, 1999).

Likewise in Libya, there is only one official curriculum for all students to use in schools. This means all children with different abilities and needs follow the same curriculum. The curriculum is still the same, although modification can be made to teaching and learning resources to meet the diverse needs of all students (Forlin, 2008). Modification and adaptation to the curriculum should be made to fit the student's learning needs (Tilton, 1996). For example, a child with learning disabilities can be offered alternative mode of assignments rather than long written instructions to bring out the best of them.

To ensure equal opportunities for all learners, Santangelo, Knotts, Clemmer and Mitchell (2008) recommend the combination of "differentiating" the curriculum, using teaching strategies and proper planning. This means teachers have to be inventive and creative to appropriately differentiate their teaching instructions and strategies in order to help all learners have meaningful and enriched learning opportunities (Pearce, 2008). For example, a visually impaired student's instructional materials can be translated into Braille or into large print, while others can use the normal text.

Inclusive teachers find out how their students learn best, assess their learning style and plan according to their needs (Forlin, 2008). An inclusive teacher identifies that students learn at different times and different students use their own modes of learning to reach the same outcome (Pearce, 2008). Therefore it is very important that the teachers know their students personally and help out them in designing their individual learning goals. This can be done by observing students in various contexts, asking parents and previous teachers, or reviewing previous academic records.

Thomas, Walker & Webb, (1998) explained that the subjection of students to different curricula with regards to their abilities means that their status as learners could be questionable. Inclusive education proposes the involvement of all students to the same mainstream curriculum that makes available the widest possible range of learning experiences (ibid). Therefore, inclusive education for students should be interconnected with the core general education curriculum,

specifically the same curriculum established for all students with and without disabilities (ibid). Nolet & McLaughlin (2005) explained that in a time where there is increased emphasis on standards-based school reform, the general education curriculum is seriously influenced by academic content standards and achievement standards.

At the centre of schooling stands the curriculum. The method of a student's instruction and their assessment is specified through the medium of a good curriculum. The range of learning experiences that are intended to lead to the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, processes, values, and attitudes are called the "curriculum"(Villa, et al., 2005). The planned sequence that will be used to help students acquire the expected outcomes, statement of expected student outcomes, and descriptions of material and activities, are actually contained in a curriculum; as a result, the term 'curricular practices' is used to refer to the different activities undertaken by teachers for the purpose of carrying out the curriculum (ibid).

UNESCO (2008b) defines an inclusive curriculum as flexible, relevant, and adjustable to the diverse characteristics and needs of lifelong learners. The kind of inclusive societies to which people aspire, equitably distributing opportunities, and eliminating poverty and marginality, are reflected in an inclusive curriculum (UNESCO, 2008b). The democratisation of learning opportunities is actually enhanced through increased understanding and responses to student diversity that are made possible by curricula (UNESCO, 2008b). A good curriculum should strive to provide options, flexibility, and consideration for all learners within schools and classrooms, and the guarantee of their individual right to education, as well as combining the density and strength of key concepts (i.e. the value of diversity, the right to lifelong learning, comprehensive citizenship education), according to Opertti, et al. (2009).

Tomlinson (1999) believes that disabled students may require modifications in the curriculum as it is taught. These modifications depend on the disability itself, together with other factors affecting their academic success and ability (ibid). In addition, the curricular materials can be insufficient for disabled students without appropriate modifications.

Westwood (2004) argues that in inclusive classrooms, in order to achieve optimum learning through the application of the above management techniques, teachers must seek to implement differentiated strategies across all school curriculum areas. He also thinks that differentiation refers to doing things differently, to target the observed differences among learners' behaviour and learning patterns (ibid). On this, McNary, Glasgow and Hicks, (2005) recommended that differentiated strategies can be used in areas such as teaching approaches used, curriculum content, assessment strategies, and the general classroom organization. However, it was also recognised that having established that teachers face unprecedented challenges in addressing students' behavioural challenges in inclusive classrooms, these differentiated strategies can have negative repercussions on the learning outcomes of the children in inclusive classrooms (ibid). Therefore, this calls for teachers to be conversant with the appropriate types of consequences to be applied when confronted with inappropriate behaviour patterns from children with disabilities. For instance, Merrell and Tymms (2001), and Reid, Vasa, Maag and Wright (1994) have suggested 'time out' as a strategy that can be used in inclusive classrooms. This strategy is particularly applicable for children who exhibit behavioural patterns associated with hyperactivity and impulsivity (Merrell et al., 2001 & Reid et al., 1994). This is done for teachers to enhance learning opportunities for all children depending on their individual ability levels (ibid). The teacher is therefore assumed to play a pivotal role in fostering optimum learning outcomes for children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (ibid).

According to the survey conducted by Taylor, Richards, Goldtsein and Schilit (1997), both special needs educators and mainstream education teachers agreed that certain changes must be made in the curriculum offerings and the instructional methodology used for children with disabilities in the mainstream classroom. The survey showed disagreement however, between experienced teachers and trainee teachers, about the education of children with disabilities in the mainstream classrooms (ibid). There were significant differences between the views of special needs educators and mainstream teachers about placement opportunities for children with mental disabilities and behavioural and emotional disabilities to be taught in the mainstream classrooms (ibid). The study further proposed that in order to achieve successful inclusion of children with disabilities into the mainstream classrooms, training in the areas of

modifying the classroom structure, curriculum, and teaching methods should commence at teacher training level (ibid).

In another study in teaching science to students with disabilities, Gurganus, Janas and Schmit (1995) found that students learn better, and understand the intended skills, when they are taught how to develop the basic skills which can help them to manipulate materials and ideas. However, they further argued that, like developing reading skills, the skills involved with science must be taught in meaningful and multiple contexts (ibid). Therefore, teachers' actions towards how they handle the teaching skills, must be geared to develop the necessary skills in children (ibid). Teachers can also capitalise on the existing skills possessed by children with disabilities, which will help them to build new ideas and skills. They further proposed that the current methods of teaching science should benefit learners with disabilities by promoting constructivist learning, hands-on experiences, and more authentic assessment (ibid). These approaches require the teacher to take on the role of learning facilitator rather than information distributor. The facilitator-teacher guides learning experiences by posing questions, providing activities that will promote further learning, and assisting students in summarising findings (ibid). These are vital skills that can be developed by teachers through their instructional strategies, depending on the needs of the children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (ibid).

### **3.8 Summary of the Chapter.**

The literature reviewed inclusive education management, and the study attempted to achieve the aim: to explore teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting students with disabilities in Libya. This includes setting the scene for inclusive education, perspectives on inclusion, disability, school culture and inclusive education and inclusive education and teaching.

According to the literature, inclusive education has been defined and interpreted by various authors differently because these issues are complex in both theory and practice. Inclusive

education has been influenced by history, time and place together with disability discourses. The barriers to successful inclusion were also included. The literature reviewed also described the essential features for successful inclusion which focussed on teacher attitudes.

All these were identified as critical elements for successful inclusion. Inclusive education is supported by the United Nations and its associated policy frameworks. Given a detailed description of what the literature states about the implementation of inclusive education, the next chapter describes the research methodology used in the study.

# CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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## 4.0 Introduction

As stated in the first chapter (see section 1.3), there is one purpose of this research to explore teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya taking into account the findings of the General People's Committee of Education report (GPCE,2008). In order to acquire in-depth understanding of the purpose above, in this chapter, the researcher will provide a detailed discussion about the research methods that was conducted. The chapter begins with the research approach, and then follows with the qualitative research philosophy, and the role of the researcher. The second section addresses the research strategy. In this part, the researcher provides a description and justification of methodology and methods, and also shares details of data relating to the participants selection and the criteria for selecting the participants, including the ethical protection of participants. The next section of this chapter explains the data collection, data analysis procedures and trustworthiness.

### **4.1The quantitative and qualitative research approaches.**

One can use both quantitative and qualitative research methods in social science research. Kumar (2005) states that the philosophy behind whether one uses qualitative or quantitative research methodologies differs, as do, at least to some extent, the methods, models and processes used. The quantitative method is sometimes described as extreme empiricism, which is reliant on control and explanation of the subject being studied (Altameem, 2007). Creswell (2003) argues the quantitative approach is most appropriate method "when the problem is to identify factors that influence an outcome". It is also better when the research needs to

understand “the best predictors of outcomes or utility of an intervention”. Moreover, to perform tests using quantitative methods, the method must be expressed from “operation” terms. These include things like, surveys, laboratory experiments and different mathematical models. How the data is analysed depends on statistical principles.

According to Hughes (2006), quantitative methods are known as scientific empirical traditional methods whereas the qualitative approach he terms as a “naturalistic phenomenological approach”. As the focus is different, the use of these two approaches depends largely on the research paradigm of the study. It is also dependant on underlying assumptions of a researcher as well as the nature of the phenomenon (Yauch and Steudel, 2003). Quantitative research has a more formal approach than qualitative and is based on “systematic and structured observations”, whereas qualitative research is based on building an overall picture from data from words not figures. Its conclusions cannot be quantified as it deals in feelings and beliefs. Accordingly, differences between the two can be summarised as stated in the study of Kumar (2005) as shown in Table (4.1).

**Table 4.1: Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Research.**

**Source: (Hossain, 2011, p156)**

<b>Difference</b>	<b>Qualitative approach</b>	<b>Quantitative approach</b>
Underpinning philosophy	Empiricism: The only knowledge that human beings acquire is from sensory experiences	Rationalism: That human beings achieve knowledge because of their capacity to reason
Approach to inquiry	Unstructured/flexible/open methodology	Structured/rigid/predetermined methodology
Main purpose of investigation	To describe variation in a phenomenon, situation, issues etc.	To quantify extent of variation in a phenomenon, situation, issues etc.
Measurement of variables	Emphasis on description of variables	Emphasis on some form of either measurement or classification of variables
Sample size	Fewer cases	Emphasis on greater sample size
Focus of inquiry	Covers multiple issues but assembles required information from fewer respondents	Narrows focus in terms of extent of inquiry, but assembles required information from a greater number of respondents

Dominant research value	Authenticity but does not claim to be value-free	(Reliability and objectivity) (value-free)
Dominant research topic	Explores experiences, meanings, perceptions and feelings	Explains prevalence, incidence, extent, nature of issues, opinions and attitude; discovers regularities and formulates theories
Analysis of data	Subjects responses, narratives, or observation data to identification of themes	Subjects variables to frequency distributions, cross-tabulation or other statistical procedures
Communication of findings	Organisation more descriptive and narrative in nature	Organisation more analytical in nature, drawing inferences and conclusions, and testing magnitude and strength of a relationship

## 4.2 Rationale for selecting qualitative research approach.

This study is conducted using a qualitative approach. The understandings of qualitative research are various and have different meanings. Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg (1992) stated that qualitative research is a research which is conducted not only in a specific field of academic study but is also combined with other disciplines. Qualitative research can be viewed as a solution to integrating a set of practices and to solving problems in real situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Merriam (1998, p. 6) said that "...qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning of people, how they make sense of the world and the experiences that they have in the world". Choosing an appropriate method to address research questions is a major part of the research. It guides the research design to choosing a suitable methodology. Therefore, in light of the investigative and inductive nature of this work, and in order to achieve the aims, qualitative research methods will be used to produce and collect suitable data.

According to Ghauri; Gronhauge and Kristianslund (1995) qualitative methods are therefore appropriate once when the objectives of the study need in-depth insight into the study. Given the nature of this research, which investigates a process and not just a static outcome, qualitative methods were deemed more suitable than quantitative methods.

The nature of the research questions in this work was mainly about what teacher's views and perceptions were on the topic of inclusive education. Compared with quantitative methods which are primarily about outcomes or products, the qualitative approach, which is mainly concerned with process, understanding and interpretation, was considered more appropriate for this study. It is assumed that meaning comes from people's experiences via the investigator's own perceptions; therefore in this sense also, qualitative research is better than quantitative in "tapping into people's perceptions".

On the other hand, as this study aim study is to explore teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya taking into account the findings of the General People's Committee of Education report (GPCE,2008), it is necessary for this research to conduct a qualitative research. Therefore, a qualitative method (interpretivism) is adopted in the choice of the research design and the methodology. Another reason for choosing a qualitative research method is because it could be an access for people to share their work cultural views, inclusive education, and experience. It offers a method to express the different aspects of social life, and how a phenomenon arises (Ryen, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). When a social phenomenon is active and it is difficult to investigate, then using a qualitative method is useful (ibid).

In qualitative research, the researcher presses upon relationships with people involved in the study to get a better understanding of people in real life. Taylor & Bogdan (1998) stated that in a qualitative approach, the researcher will know the subject (person) personally and will analyse how they develop their own definitions of various things. Through a qualitative method, the actuality, real conditions, and subject's perceptions are expected to emerge without formal measurements, as described by Wolf & Tymitz (1976-1977).

Qualitative data can be used very effectively to identify a pattern or trends in relation to a specific phenomenon (ibid). The qualitative method requires a focus on a very small number

of sites. Schools or particular groups of children or teachers within schools are researched because they are seen as typical, or because they can offer insights into what may be occurring in other schools (Walford, 2005). With qualitative research, the data collected are in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers (ibid). When presented in narrative, the data provides tones and means of helping the reader to connect with the research that pure numerical data are unable to convey (Burton, Brundrell, & Jones, 2008). Researchers try to analyse the data as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded or transcribed. They also say the real strength of this way of researching is in the way that quoting from participants is able to bring insight and humanity into the analysis (ibid).

### **4.3 Research Philosophy**

A research philosophy develops based on the way the researcher chooses to expand the knowledge and how they conduct the research (Feather, 2013). It also helps the researcher to decide what kind of method they will employ, for example positivism and interpretivism, and why you have chosen these (ibid). Both of those terms were interpreted as a way to get the right knowledge based on ontology and epistemology.

According to Crotty (2010), that epistemology is a science providing the philosophical basis used to determine kinds of knowledge and to ascertain whether the knowledge gained was appropriate and true. Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) expressed that epistemology as a science of how to discover, how to generate knowledge, what criteria to use to differ between true or false knowledge, and how to describe that reality of life. Crotty (2010), tried to simplify the understanding of epistemology, as knowledge that discusses a theoretical perspective. Theoretical perspective contains a kind of reality (ontology) and the method that is used to reveal that reality (epistemology) (ibid). Epistemology underlies the emergence of various theoretical perspectives. There are three kinds of epistemology, namely: objectivism, subjectivism and constructivism (ibid). Objectivism is related to positivism and post positivism, while subjectivism and constructivism are related to interpretivism (ibid). Ludwig Wittgenstein had a great influence in the Vienna Circle, because he developed a method which is used to obtain valid knowledge (Schmitz, 2004). This method is called the Verification

Principle or logical positivism (ibid). According to this method, no statement is meaningful unless it is capable of being verified. There are two ways to verify a statement. First, by checking the subject definition from that statement, for example: ‘Smith is a male’; secondly, to verify this statement one can examine the definition of Smith’s name.

Interpretive researchers believe that reality consists of people’s subjective experiences of the external world; thus, they may adopt an inter-subjective epistemology and the ontological belief that reality is socially constructed (Walsham, 2006). According to Willis (2007) interpretivists are anti-foundationalists, who believe there is no single correct route or particular method to knowledge. Walsham (2006) argues that in the interpretive tradition there are no ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ theories. Instead, they should be judged according to how ‘interesting’ they are to the researcher as well as those involved in the same areas (ibid). They attempt to derive their constructs from the field by an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest (ibid). The interpretivist paradigm is the most suitable for this study because of its subjective stance and view of the world as socially constructed through human perceptions and interactions.

**Defining grounded theory and its relevance.** Grounded theory is one of four qualitative designs often used in the field of social sciences; the other designs are ethnographies, case studies, and phenomenological studies. The major difference between grounded theory and the others is the emphasis placed on theory development (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

A noted advantage of grounded theory is its use of a systematic approach to data analysis. Glaser (1978) defined grounded theory as “...systematic generating of theory from data that itself is systematically obtained from social research” (p. 2). Strauss and Corbin (1990) similarly defined it as “...a qualitative research method using a systemized set of procedures to develop and inductively derive grounded theory about a phenomenon” (p. 24). Other qualitative research methods are often dependant on broad principles and not a systematic approach. This can lead to difficulty in both application and interpretation (Myers, 2009).

On the other hand one has to consider disadvantages. According to Polit and Beck (2010), "...generalization is an act of reasoning that involves drawing broad conclusions from particular instances that is making inference about the unobserved based on the observed" (p. 1451). This generalization issue is not discussed as often in qualitative research which is considered as complicated and controversial. This is because the main goal of qualitative research is to provide a deep, contextualized understanding of human experiences. Research questions explored using grounded theory allows a researcher unique opportunity to gain findings that adds further to the explanation of these experiences. This uniqueness comes from the nature of grounded theory in its exploration and ability to reveal high level concepts and theories which are not specific to one particular participant or setting (Ibid). Ayres, Kavanagh and Knafl (2003) argued that "...just as with statistical analysis, the end product of qualitative analysis is generalization, regardless of language used to describe it" (p. 881). Polit and Beck (2010) say that knowledge is not generated by the testing of new theories, but that it grows through being confirmed. They add that these confirmations are obtained from "systematic replication" leading to confirmatory evidence. Stebbins (2001) stressed that the "...main goal of exploratory research is the production of inductively derived generalizations about the group, process, activity, or situation under study" (p. 6). Afterwards, researchers add the generalizations into grounded theory. Here however, lies the conundrum: while one has a unique opportunity firstly to analyse, then interpret, and further interpret data as necessary when using grounded theory. This leads to the question of what happens if results are not easily generalized? Considering that grounded theory is a qualitative method, external validity or generalizability may be threatened by limitations of the research being undertaken. This is why they should be considered by the researcher.

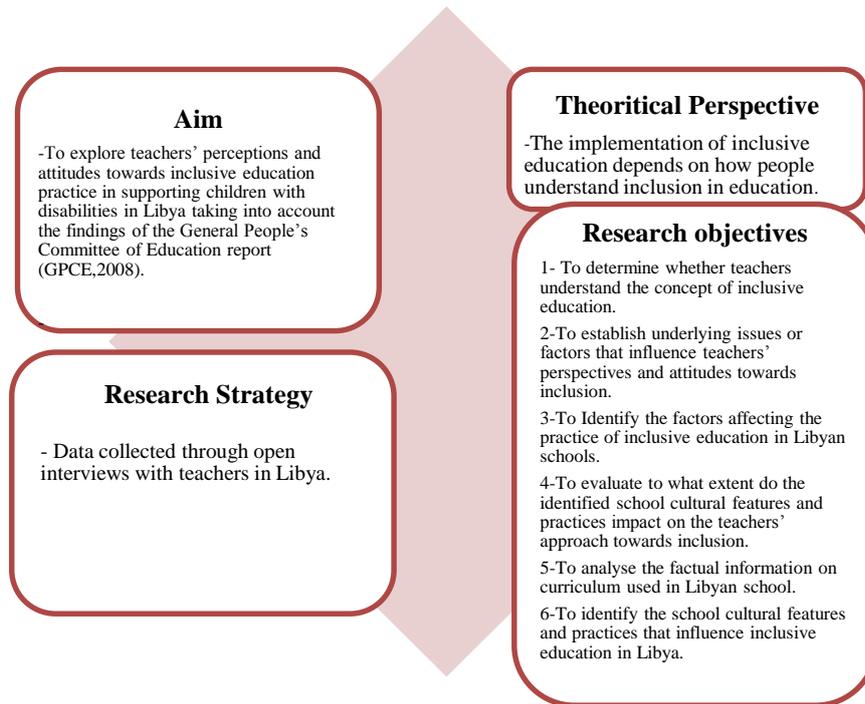
The researcher did not use grounded theory as criticised above owing to the length of time required. This is due to the need to record, transcribe and code all the interview data (Bryman, 2008). Another criticism is when such an approach is used the flow of narrative context can be lost (Bryman, 2008). This was one of the difficulties faced by the writer in presenting the data, although it was largely avoided by referring backward and forward to the service user's stories. This was not easy to achieve and at times their stories appeared disjointed.

**Positivism**, has defined by Easterby-Smith; Thorpe and Lowe (2008), as a philosophy that the social world exists externally, and which its properties have to be compelled to measure through objective methods, instead of being secondary subjectively through awareness, thinking or intuition. However, based on the nature of this research, the researcher adopted an interpretive stance, which is created on the view that there is no general truth and, therefore, regards reality as an essentially subjective social product that is constructed and interpreted by humans according to their beliefs and value systems (ibid). Interpretive research tries to know phenomena through the meanings that the research participants assign to them. It focuses on the on the complete quality of human sense-making as a situation emerges (Bryman, 2008).

**Interpretivism** is a paradigm which uses a human point of view to develop the meaning of life based on experience, or is concerned with the notion of human action (Bruner 1990, p.19). For example, the complexity and the case in the social world of business and management are complex and unique (ibid). There are many things that can happen related to the interaction between people as actors in the social world. Therefore, the research in this area directly raises the generalizability of research questions to confine the rich complexity of that situation (ibid). On the other hand, the interpretivism would dispute that generalisation is not the importance thing to capture complex situations; to illustrate this; the circumstances of today may not apply in three months' time (ibid). Remenyi (1998, p.35) discuss 'the details of the situation to understand the reality of perhaps a reality working behind them. This statement pursues the interpretivism position that to be able to understand reality individuals have to explore the subjective meanings motivating people's actions (ibid). It is similar to the term 'social constructionism', which is the idea understanding the complexity of meaningful reality in this world from the point of view of any individual who lives inside it (Schwandt,1994 , Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.146). In other words, people not only interact with their environment, they are also looking for the right meaning through their interpretation of events. Hence, the role of the interpretivism in this study is to look for and to understand the subjective reality and also to be able to understand their motives, actions and intentions of these participants.

This research will begin with an assumption that the implementation of inclusive education is a complex process which could be understood through the people who are involved in inclusive education implementation. In line with the aim of this study, this research wants to examine teachers' perspectives and attitudes on inclusive education for children with disabilities in Libya. Therefore, interpretivism is relevant to be a foundation of this research. The aim of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya taking into account the findings of the General People's Committee of Education report (GPCE, 2008). This research has therefore used a literature review to inform the study. The theory of this study is not to test it like the use of a hypothesis or experiments but, instead, to use it as a guideline for the researcher to collect some data based on that theory. The data has been collected through interviews with participants to explore their understanding of inclusive education. This research is very contextual, which means that the results of this study will be limited to inferred findings that can be only fitted into specific research which has the same research focus. Generally, the approach of this study can be described as follows:

**Figure 4.1 Approach of this study**



#### **4.4 Research design.**

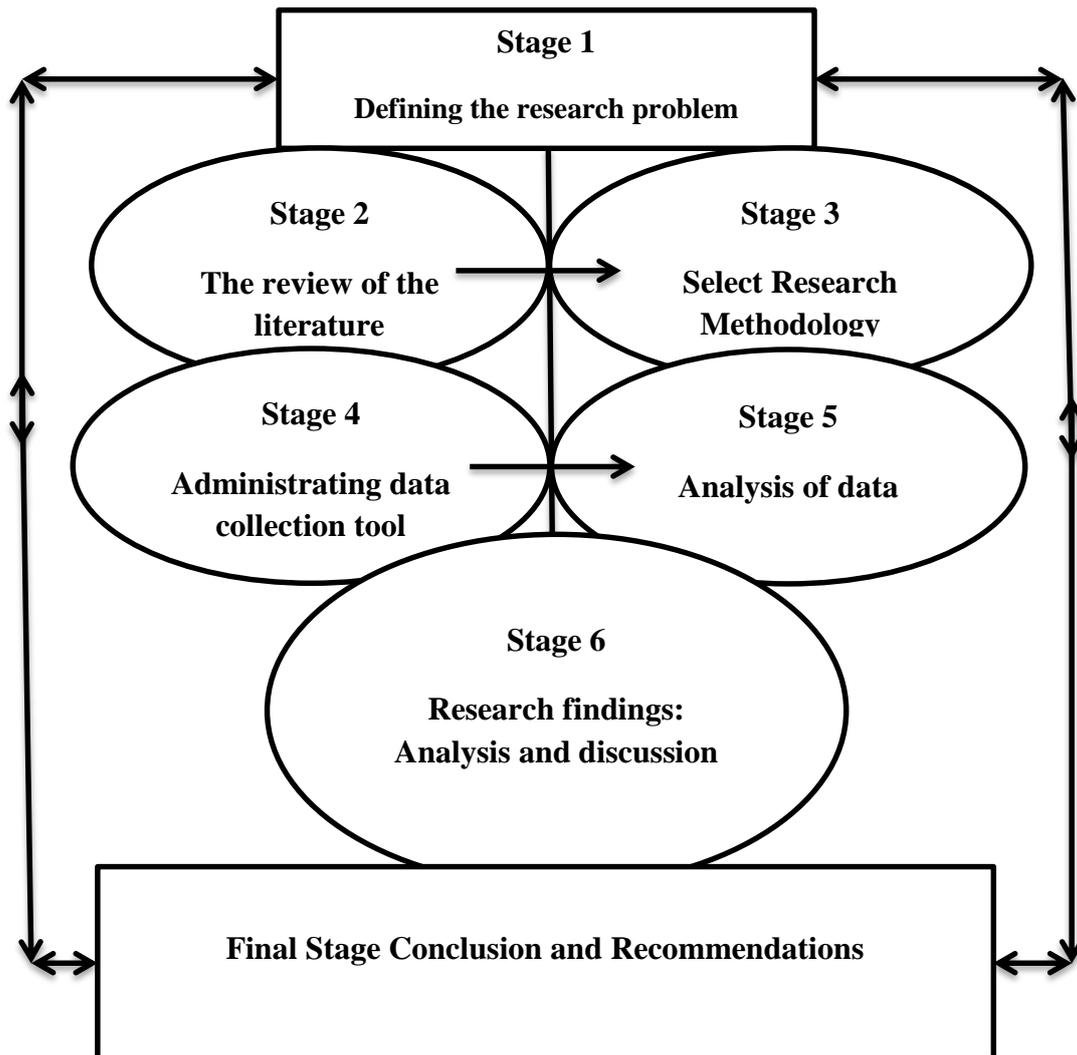
A research design is the overall plan for making decisions as to what data are to be collected, what sources will be used and what methods will be employed in their collection. It is the research question or questions which inform the research design. Nachmias and Nachmias, (2008) define research design thus: guides the researcher in the process of collecting, analysing and understanding observation. It is a logical model of proof that enables the research to draw inferences that enable relations among the variables under investigation (ibid). According to the importance of research design stems from its role as an important link between the theory and argument that educated the research and the empirical data collected (ibid).

According to Bryman (2008), the research design creates the framework for the collection and analysis of data, and the performance of research design must be guided by the research questions. De Vaus (2002) states that the function of a research design is to confirm that the data collected permits the researcher to answer the research questions unambiguously. Yin

(2003) argues that the aim of the research design is to help in achieving the research aim and objectives. Hence, the selection of a research design ought to be in keeping with the general research strategy, because the chosen methodology directs the strategies used and also the manner in which every is used (Silverman, 2000).

The inductive approach is widely used in the social science domain as it is considered that causal connections can only be identified through comprehending the manner in which individuals construe their environment (Silverman, 2000). This study is not concerned with testing hypotheses and theories elaborated in advance, but rather seeks to explain and interpret an aspect of social reality (ibid). Inductive methods are used in order to conceptualise the phenomena encountered in the course of the study and explore theories on the relationships revealed (See figure, 4.2).

#### **Figure 4.2 Overall Research Design**



#### **4.5 The Role of Researcher.**

The success of qualitative study depends on how the researcher can manage and interpret their research relating to participants and data. Creswell (2003, p.184) stated that qualitative research is interpretative research, with the inquirer typically involved in a sustained and intensive participants' experience. This closeness brings with it possible biases and perspective that, if not carefully managed, could affect the validity of research (ibid). Moreover, Merriam (1998, p.20) also pointed out that in qualitative research the data will be collected directly from participants, which is known as primary data.

Merriam (1998, p.20) suggested that in qualitative research, the researcher must have "...an enormous tolerance for ambiguity, must be sensitive or highly intuitive, should have good skills in communication with respondents, establishes rapport, asks good questions and listens

intently". Merriam (1998) also stated the importance of being a careful observer for the researcher who conducted a qualitative research in their research. This research is conducted through face-to-face interviews. The researcher was personally responsible for all aspects of the research process; this begins by choosing the participants who could provide information related to the research context, composing the interview guide, analysing data and interpreting all findings (ibid).

#### **4.6 Research Aim, Research Objectives and Contribution.**

As previously described in the first chapter (see section 1.3), this study has one aim:

- 1- To explore teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya taking into account the findings of the General People's Committee of Education report (GPCE, 2008).

Therefore, to achieve those aims, this study has five objectives.

- 1- To determine whether teachers understand the concept of inclusive education.
- 2- To establish underlying issues or factors that influence teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards inclusion.
- 3- To identify the factors affecting the practice of inclusive education in Libyan schools.
- 4- To evaluate to what extent do the identified school cultural features and practices impact on the teachers' approach towards inclusion.
- 5- To analyse the factual information on the curriculum used in Libyan schools.
- 6- To identify the school cultural features and practices that influence inclusive education in Libya.

The contribution of this research is expected to expand the understanding of inclusive education, particularly in Libya, and on a practical level, it is expected to provide recommendations for the Libyan government in designing inclusive education programmes.

## **4.7 Research Context.**

The following information describes the site selection of this study, sampling method and description of the participants.

### **4.7.1 Site Selection.**

Specific criteria are used to select the sites for this research. The research focused on the special schools and mainstream schools. The reason for this is that special schools and mainstream schools at basic and secondary education level is free and compulsory up to the end of basic education (grade 9) for males and females with no social or quality-based distinction. It is based on the report of the GPCE (2008) that the priority of educational policy in Libya is to 'spread education' through a 'comprehensive policy of education for all' (GPCE, 2008, p.20). According to this report, this policy was emphasised by the rule of law (Education Law of 1971). This orientation has resulted in increasing school enrolment rates up to 95% in 2003 (GPCE, 2008, p. 21). It will therefore be easy for the researcher to obtain some information about inclusive education programmes from teachers at these schools; it will become the primary source of data for this research since the implementation of inclusive education in both institutions.

### **4.7.2 Sampling.**

The selection of an appropriate participant sample size was of major concern to the researcher; firstly to ensure an accurate representation of the population. Secondly for economic considerations, and thirdly for time considerations and a desire to complete the data collection process within a fixed time frame of two months. In qualitative studies the sampling is strategic (Merriam, 1998). It is important to choose informants that are most likely to have a lot of information to share on the theme in question and represent as wide a social interaction as possible (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Kvale, 1996). The Merriam, (1998) defines sampling as the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose

of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. The concept of the research subject is related to the question of what and who will be investigated. The concept of the unit of observation is related to the data source or attempts to explain the source of the research data (ibid). The source of data could be a person, a thing, a document or an activity process.

There are two types of sampling technique, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Yamane, 1967). Probability sampling is selected in such a way as to be representative of the population. It provides the most valid or credible results because it reflects the characteristics of the population from which it is selected (ibid). Non probability sampling is a process where probabilities cannot be assigned to the units objectively, and hence it becomes difficult to determine the reliability of the sample results in terms of probability (ibid). This research will turn to the forms of non-probability sampling as follows: qualitative sampling procedures are based on non-random processes for gathering data, because manipulation and control are not the purpose of the research; they are well suited for exploratory research intended to generate new ideas that will be systematically tested later.

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that ‘many qualitative researchers employ “... purposive and not random, sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings and individuals where ...the processes being studied are most likely to occur.” (ibid, p. 202) Sampling is done with a purpose in mind. As mentioned previously, in this instance the researcher already knows something about the specific people or an institution which has conducted inclusive education in school or as a programme. In effect, they are selected with a specific purpose in mind and for their relevance to the topic of investigation. Both probability and non-probability sample techniques can be divided into different types of sample, as shown in table (4.2).

**Table (4.2) the types of sample techniques Source: Cohen et al. (1994, p79)**

Namely probability sampling	Definition
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Simple random	Selecting the required number of respondents randomly from a list of the population.
Cluster	Selecting a sample randomly from a large population. (e.g., some schools from a district).
Systematic	Selecting subjects from a population list in a systematic rather than random way.
<b>Non-probability sampling</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Convenience (accidental)	Choosing nearby persons to help as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained.
Purposive	Choosing the respondents who possess the required data.
Quota	Obtaining representatives of the various elements of the total population in the proportions in which they occur there.
Dimensional	Identifying various factors of interest in a population and obtaining at least one respondent of every combination.
Snowball	Identifying a small number of individuals who have the required characteristics and then using these individuals to identify others who have the same qualities.

Bryman (2008) defines a non-probability sample as “...a sample that has not been selected using a random selection method.” (p. 85). This definition perfectly applies to the sample involved in the research study, which implicitly makes the non-probability method the most appropriate method of sampling for the purpose of this research. The selection of the sample in this study used a snowball sampling; the researcher was able to use snowball sampling to get participation from the teachers in special schools, primary schools and secondary schools (ibid). Snowball sampling is a type of purposeful sampling that identifies cases of interest from people who know other people who would be willing to participate in the study, these people know other people who could be referred, and the chain continues (ibid). The snowball gets larger and greater mutually as one accumulates new information-rich cases (Patton, 1990, p.169).

#### **4.7.3 Participants.**

Through this method of selecting teachers from special schools, primary schools and secondary schools, the researcher had a broad range of interview subjects. These were largely chosen as

they were people known to the researcher and their friends. These participants also provided rich, varied and in-depth information because of their high levels of experience. With assistance from former colleagues, the researcher ensured all participants had background experiences with children with disabilities.

In this study, sixty teachers agreed to participate. Twenty were teachers from special schools, twenty were from primary schools, and the other twenty were from secondary schools. However, only thirty six teachers from three educational institutions involved with inclusive education programmes turned up on the day of the interview. Twelve teachers were from three different special schools, twelve teachers were from three different primary schools and twelve teachers were from three different secondary schools. However, for the purposes of the current study, the homogeneous sampling procedure was used for several reasons pertaining to both the research participants and the research context.

**Piloting interview schedule.** Pilot study is “.... a small scale piece of research used as a practise run” (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001, p. 476). The purpose of the pilot study is may check the accuracy of questions, or to see if there are any technical problems within the research design. Pilot studies give the research more validity and are more reliable (ibid). It also allows the researcher to consider how long the research will take; train interviewers; and get funding upon proof of useful research.

A disadvantage of pilot studies is that they can be time-consuming and add to costs. In addition they add to the workload (ibid). The idea is to do a trial (or pilot) study on just a sample of the research population and not the whole of the research population (ibid). Samples aim to represent the population with similar proportions of people in terms of age, gender, class and ethnicity. However it must be added that the researcher did not use a Pilot study. The research population was relatively small anyway and time was limited when the data was collected. The reason was partly that there was political upheaval in Libya, which limited the researchers’ movements. In addition, the numbers of people teaching disabled students were relatively

small. Thus obtaining the opportunity to interview them was difficult and therefore piloting was not an option.

Firstly, teachers from three different schools in Libya were assumed to have been teaching during the time of the study. Secondly, the majority of the teachers had been teaching in Libya for several years. Hence, they were more knowledgeable about the research contexts and the students with disabilities, as shown in table (4.2) below.

**Table (4.3) Candidates for Interviews**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age (Between)</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Years of teaching</b>	<b>Disability experience</b>	<b>Disability of students in class</b>
<b>ST 1</b>	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 -15	Yes	Down's syndrome
ST 2	M	19 – 30	Teachers' Diploma	6 – 10	Yes	Hearing impairment
ST 3	M	19 – 30	Teachers' Diploma	6 – 10	Yes	Hearing impairment
ST 4	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Visual impairment
ST 5	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Hearing impairment
ST 6	F	31 – 40	Bachelor	11 – 15	Yes	Speech impairment
ST 7	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Visual impairment
ST 8	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Visual impairment
ST 9	F	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Hearing impairment
ST 10	M	31 - 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Down syndrome
ST 11	F	19 – 30	Bachelor	6 – 10	Yes	Speech impairment
ST 12	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Hearing impairment
<b>PST 1</b>	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Physical disability
PST 2	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	None	Visual impairment
PST 3	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	16 – 20	Yes	Visual impairment
PST 4	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Down's syndrome
PST 5	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	None	Hearing impairment
PST 6	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Learning disability
PST 7	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Learning disability
PST 8	F	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	None	Physical disability
PST 9	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Physical disability

PST 10	M	19 – 30	Bachelor	6 – 10	Yes	Physical disability
PST 11	F	19 – 30	Teachers' Diploma	6 – 10	None	Learning disability
PST 12	F	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Visual impairment
<b>SST 1</b>	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Learning disability
SST 2	M	31 – 40	Bachelor	11 – 15	Yes	Learning disability
SST 3	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	None	Learning disability
SST 4	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	None	Learning disability
SST 5	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	None	Physical disability
SST 6	F	31 – 41	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Physical disability
SST 7	M	31 – 41	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Learning disability
SST 8	M	31 – 40	Bachelor	11 – 15	Yes	Hearing impairment
SST 9	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	None	Hearing impairment
SST 10	F	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	None	Visual impairment
SST 11	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Learning disability
SST 12	M	31 – 40	Teachers' Diploma	11 – 15	Yes	Learning disability

In the reporting of these findings, the special schools teachers are referred to as ST 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. The primary schools teachers are referred to as PST 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. The secondary schools teachers are referred to as SST 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 respectively.

#### **4.8 Data Collection.**

The use of the interview method enabled the researcher to obtain information that would probably not have been provided if questionnaires or other methods had been used. Thus, interviews are seen as appropriate for this study. In the same vein, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) stated that the utilization of qualitative research interviews ought to enable the gathering of a wealth of detailed information, though it is necessary to develop sufficient competence to conduct these interviews and to be able to gain access to the sort of information required. On this Collies and Hussey (2003) noted that interviewing is a technique of assembling information data within which designated participants are asked to define what they are doing, assume or feel. Interviews make it simple to compare answers and may be conducted face-to-face with a group of people or an individual (ibid). Interviews are among the most widely-used strategies for information generation within the social sciences. Those are

significant which help us to address research questions and aims. Interviews are particularly conducive to producing data which deals with topics in depth or in detail (ibid).

Semi-structured interviews are intensive interviews usually involving a small number of respondents. They are particularly useful when exploring experiences, interests and beliefs, and whilst focused, they allow the respondent space to explore issues at length, thus providing rich data which may form the basis of a deductive (thematic) or inductive (grounded) theory used to identify emergent themes and concepts (Collies & Hussey, 2003). The interviews used in this study were semi-structured interviews (Section 4.8.1 defines the rationales for using interviews).

#### **4.8.1 Rationales for using semi-structured interviews.**

The interview method is seen as a unique research method, because it involves the collection of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals where the answers are either written or recorded (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Hinchey (2008) is of the opinion that interviewing is probably the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies in education, and in many studies it is the only source of data. Interviews have many purposes. One of the main purposes of an interview is to obtain information that is relevant to research.

According to Best and Kahn (1993), in areas where human motivation is revealed through actions, feelings and attitudes, the interview can be most effective. There is a higher response rate because the respondents are actually involved and motivated (ibid). This may enable them to say more than was originally expected (Cohen, et al., 2007).

In the views of Bell (1999), as a data gathering technique, the interview has unique advantages (ibid). One of the main advantages of an interview is that it is easy to conduct and direct. Many people are more willing to talk than to write (ibid). In this situation the interviewer has the ability to get an answer to all the questions, and the interview could also generate some very interesting points (ibid). Another advantage of the interview is its flexibility or adaptability.

For example, the interviewer has the opportunity to observe the person and the total situation in which he or she is responding. The interviewer can make use of these responses to alter the interview situation. If the information given is irrelevant or does not make sense, the interviewer can press for additional information to obtain more data and greater clarity. Likewise if the interviewee does not understand the questions or misinterprets the question, the interviewer can either repeat or explain the meaning of the questions. With personal contact, there is greater opportunity for an individual to participate and provide the desired information (ibid). Once the interviewer establishes a relaxed relationship with the interviewee, information that may not have been forthcoming or confidential is more easily extracted. The interview is also a great advantage in situations where the person interviewed cannot read and understand a written questionnaire (ibid). The only readily available information gathering technique is the interview.

#### **4.8.2 Semi-Structured Interviews Procedure.**

For this research, the interview consisted of a set of questions that were carefully designed in terms of wording and sequence. These include face-to-face. Stringer (2004) points out that when formulating questions for a semi-structured interview, the researcher must be at pains to ensure that the questions are unambiguous, and must avoid leading questions in order to permit the respondents to express themselves freely. As the semi-structured interview was chosen for this study, the researcher has attempted to follow Stringer's advice and has formulated the questions in such a way as to ensure that their meaning is unequivocal and also that they are appropriate to the objective of the research purpose (ibid).

All semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face between the researcher and the participant. They were therefore conducted on a one to-one basis with a single participant, and the choice of time of the interview day was left to the respondents. All interviews were conducted between July and September 2012 in Libya.

In Libya, these types of studies need to obtain the necessary approval from the relevant authorities. Accordingly, it was necessary to make contact with officials to facilitate the process of completing the interviews. An official letter from the Ph.D supervisor was issued, requesting interviewees to co-operate with the researcher and supply the information required for the study. It also contained general information about the researcher, and about the purpose and scientific nature of the research (See appendixes, 1).

Before the interviews the teachers were asked to fill in a demographic information sheet using tick boxes. This included a list of variables such as information about age, years of teaching experience and disabilities of children they had worked with. While giving out the form the researcher assured the participants that information gathered on the form would remain confidential and it would not be used to identify them. Each interview took approximately an hour. The participants were thanked for their participation and support for the study. This acknowledgement was recorded on tape.

With all this research data recorded on tapes, the researcher transcribed all the taped material that had been gathered the same day that each interview was completed. Transcribing the data after every interview helped the researcher to formulate further questions that he thought were important and relevant, and these questions were carried over for the next teacher to be interviewed. All data were transcribed in detail.

After transcribing his first interview, the researcher began to make notes about what the participant said. After transcribing the second interview the researcher made to make comparisons to see if some of the things that interviewees had said were similar, and set tentative categories. The researcher did this for all his transcribing and by the end of his interviews he had analysed most of the information that he had collected. All this helped the researcher to get a clearer picture of the issues that answered the purpose of his research.

#### **4.9 Trustworthiness.**

The purpose of trustworthiness in a qualitative research is to support the analysis that the research findings are qualified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.290). Trustworthiness of the study depended on the researcher's ability to convey trust to the reader (ibid). The research findings should be as trustworthy as possible and can be evaluated in relation to the outlined process to generate the findings (ibid).

There are various aspects of trustworthiness that need awareness in qualitative research such as: credibility, transferability, and dependability (Patton, 2002; Polit & Hungler, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These aspects are similar to the concepts in quantitative research, which is still common, namely: validity, reliability and generalizability (Shields & King, 2001; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992).

Credibility is an evaluation of research findings which refers to confidence that the interpretation is 'credible' and is drawn from the participants' original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.296; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). In this research study, the researcher conducted triangulation and peer debriefing as a technique to achieve credibility in his research findings. As Patton (1980) stated, to make the interpretation data in qualitative research, the researcher should check their data over and over again from multiple sources such as interviews, observations or documents.

Triangulation is a validity procedure where the researcher establishes their data through multiple methods such as observations, interviews and documents (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Denzin & Lincoln (2000) identified four types of triangulation: across data sources (which can include person, times, places), theories, methods (i.e interview, observations, and documents) and among different investigators.

There are three forms of triangulation these are triangulation of: philosophy, paradigms, and data collection method (Feather, 2013). In relation to this study triangulation philosophy was employed, those been epistemology and axiology. That is, study of knowledge values (Feather, 2013).

Peer debriefing is the review of data and research process by someone who is known or expert with focussed research (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this study the researcher employed this technique to seek an agreement as a way in establishing credibility. The researcher worked and discussed with his peer, who is a lecturer and expert in inclusive education programmes, to reflect on the process and gather perceptions in order to continually make adjustments as needed during the study.

Transferability is the degree to which the findings can be transferred or applied to other research, beyond the same method or the bounds of this research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Hunggler, 1999, p.717). In the context of this study, the researcher provided some documents that can be used by other researchers to transfer into other cases or to repeat with similar methods to this research.

Another aspect of trustworthiness is dependability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined dependability thus: "...seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced changes". It means that the changing nature of phenomena will become problematic in qualitative research. Thus, the research process in the study must provide details, such as a general plan for each stage of research, the details of the data process and the evaluating data. This is needed for future researchers to repeat the work in the same field.

#### **4.10 Data Analysis.**

Analysis of research data in a qualitative study is an ongoing process, one that occurs throughout the data collection period. Powell and Connaway (2004) describe qualitative data analysis as a cyclical process in which the collection of data affects the analysis of data.

This study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya taking into account the findings of the General People's Committee of Education report (GPCE, 2008). As mentioned previously, a qualitative approach will be used to achieve the aim of the study. However the analysis of qualitative data is particularly different from statistical study, as the data does not appear to be in a quantitative form (Powell & Connaway, 2004). Content analysis forms a structure to establish open-ended information (ibid). More details about the content analysis forms are presented in the following section, which offers a comprehensive description of the way in which content analysis is used in this research.

##### **4.10.1 Qualitative Content Analysis.**

Content analysis technique is a type of analysis used in this study. It is considered to be among the most significant research techniques in the field of social sciences, and it is also widely used in various academics arenas like science, psychology, sociology, politics, and communications. Busch, De Maret, Flynn, Kellum & Meyers (2005) define content analysis as a tool that is used to identify the presence of certain words within texts or sets of texts. Based on these definitions and in the context of this study, content analysis is outlined as a general strategy for how the investigator can set about answering the research questions. In general, analysis of qualitative data is somewhat difficult in comparison to analysis of quantitative data (ibid).

Although the previous literature (Cohen et al., 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2004) shows that there is no framework of analysis of qualitative data, numerous frameworks and propositions

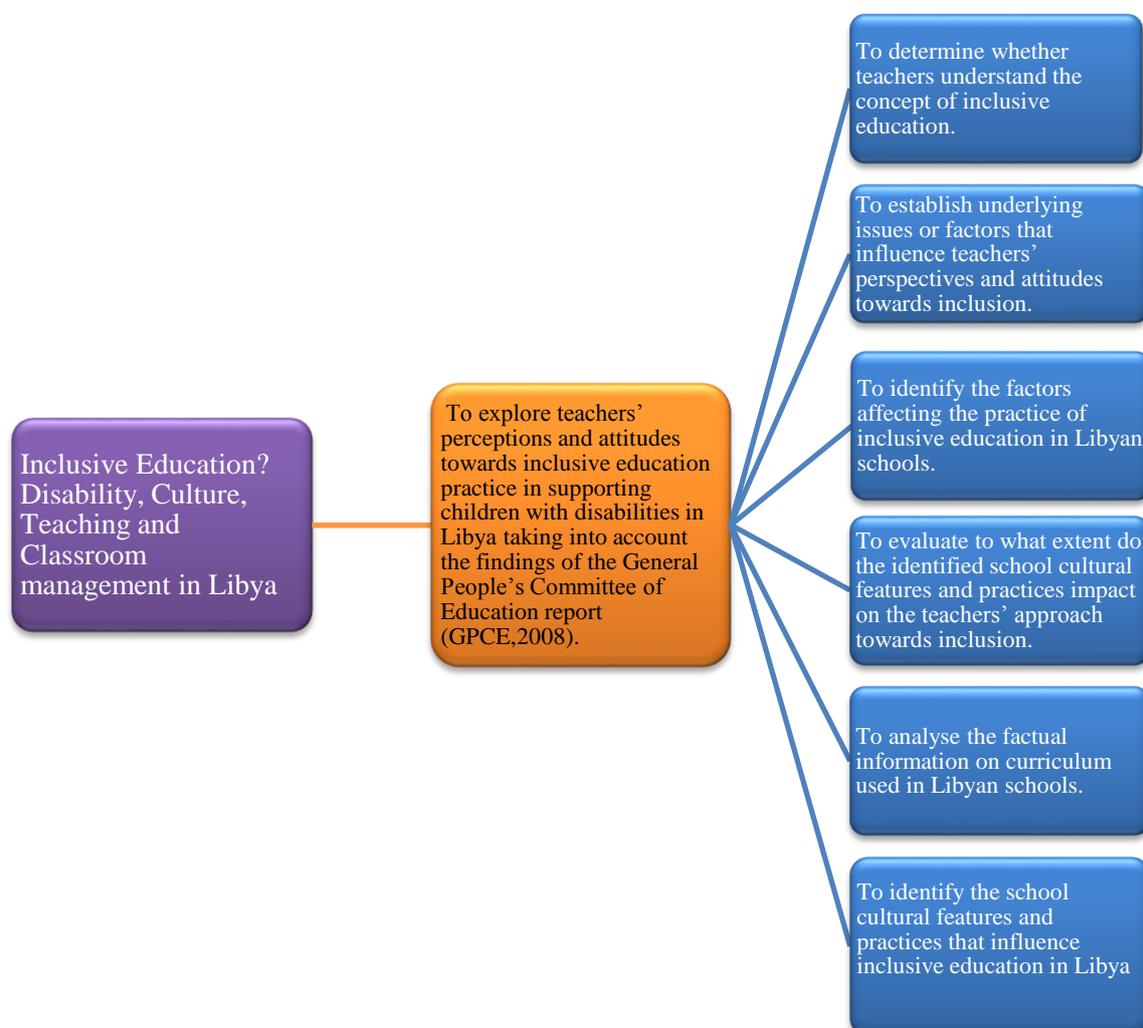
have been developed (ibid). All agreed that analysis of qualitative data must be conducted in a systematic manner through the adoption of a well-defined framework.

Qualitative content analysis is most frequently employed in the analysis of interview transcripts with the aim of discovering opinions related to specific information (Cohen et al., 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). In order to collect the information required to answer the research questions, in this instance the researcher employed semi-structured interviews.

The process of qualitative content analysis techniques often begins during the early stages of data collection in this case, to enhance the understanding of teachers' perspectives and attitudes on inclusive education for children with disabilities in Libya. The researcher has taken into account some of these stages, which are listed by Weber (2012) as distinguishing the question to be investigated, framing the sampling units, determining and processing the content classes, and assessing reliability and validity.

As previously mentioned, the overall aim of this study is to examine teachers' perspectives and attitudes on inclusive education for children with disabilities in Libya; this aim was with six objectives, and the methods used to answer each research question. However, the researcher began to develop questions directly related to the themes and questions that had emerged during the literature study, and based on the problem being investigated through the analysis. The relation between interview themes and research questions are illustrated in figure (4.3).

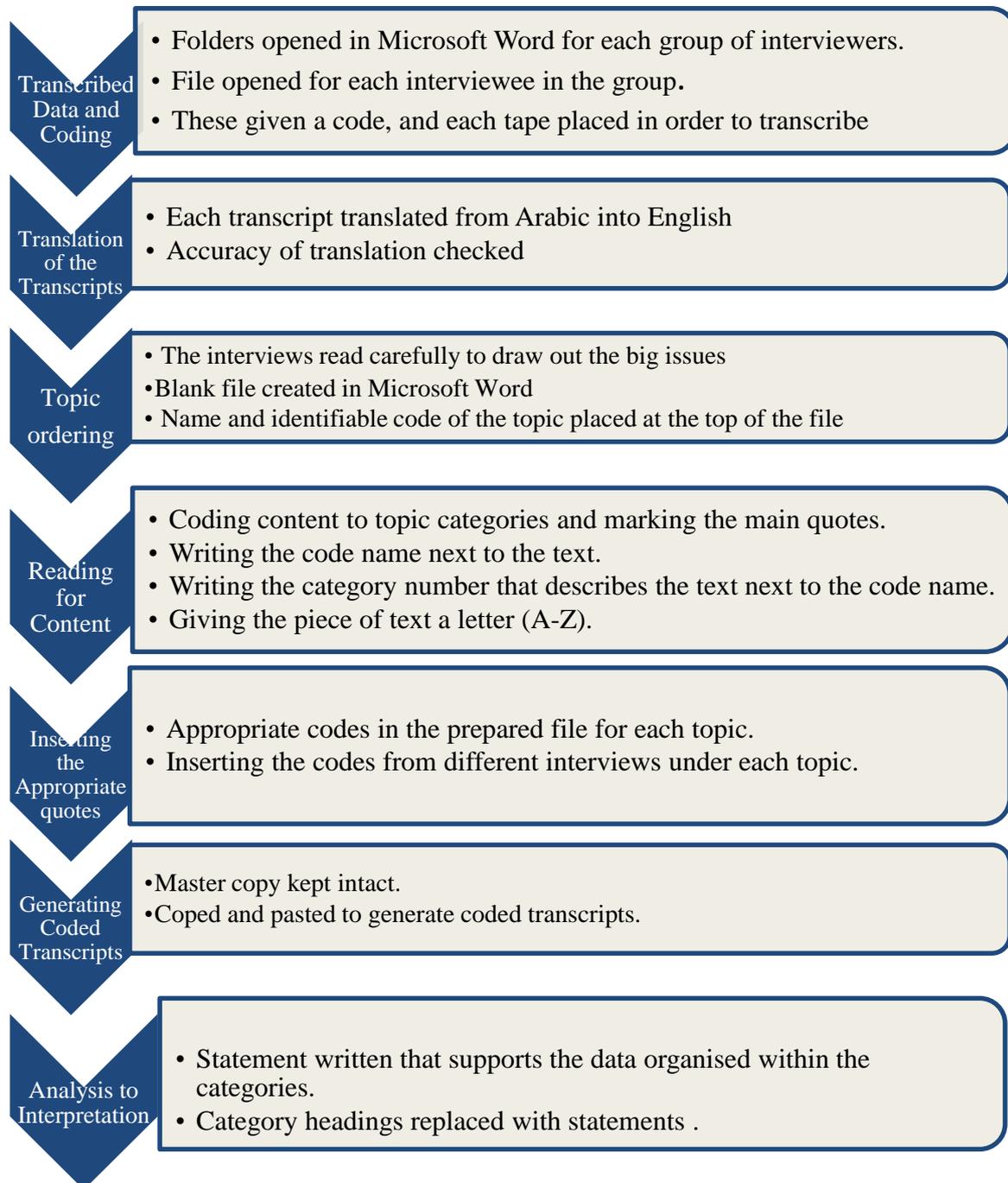
**Figure 4.3: Connections between Interview Setting and Research Problem**



#### **4.10.2 Data Analysis Strategies.**

The researcher sought assistance from the work of Radnor (2002) to develop a framework to analyse the qualitative data. The steps of the applied framework are shown in figure (4.4).

**Figure 4.4: A frameworks for the analysis of the interview source (Radnor, 2002, p.88)**



Based on the previous literature, for data collection and analysis, three techniques can be used for coding. These are manual coding, computer coding or a combination of these. According to Kelle (1995), computer-aided methods can enhance the validity of research findings from

qualitative studies and can be more easily viewed and compared. This increases the trustworthiness of qualitative findings considerably, because these facilities can confirm that the research questions are actually stranded in the data and not based on lone and extremely untypical events. In this vein and in an attempt to avoid bias and data invalidity in this study, and once all interviews had been conducted, the researcher followed Tesch's (1990, p. 142-145) eight-step system for organizing qualitative data. (1) Review all transcripts to get a sense of the whole. (2) Focus on a single interview and ask, what is this about? Focus on general topics, not specific content, and jot down thoughts as they occur. (3) Repeat step two several times, then create a list of all topics. (4) Start coding the data based on the topics from step three. (5) Look for straightforward but descriptive wording for categories and, where possible, reduce the total list of categories by grouping related items. (6) Finalize categories and create abbreviations to use in coding. (7) Test categories by coding all data, and (8) make adjustments and recode if necessary (Tesch's, 1990). Based on this system, the researcher prepared the information and deleted any irrelevancies, matched pieces together, and arranged data in chronological order or according to subject. A considerable amount of unedited raw data was gathered from the interviews, which were transcribed, arranged and analysed before writing the final analysis.

#### **4.10.3 Coding interviews.**

King (2004) defined code as a label attached to a section of text, to index it as relating to a theme or issue in the data which the researcher has identified as important to his or her interpretation. The researcher began the coding procedure while reviewing the transcript from one interview. The researcher decided to use coding for the data analysis as he wished to reveal participants' points of view, and made notes and comments in the margins of the transcript while reading it. After additional codes had been extracted from the raw data, the researcher searched for links between codes in order to begin creating new categories or to discover whether they were appropriate to existing categories.

In this study, the researcher began the data analysis by reading all answers and listening to all recordings and transcribing the accounts into text form. This was to get a general sense of the

data. The data and related materials were reviewed and reorganised for the preliminary coding. At this stage, the researcher considered interviews and written answers and then clustered related data together. Each cluster was labelled according to its characteristics. After primary categories were developed, the researcher then looked for similar or closely related categories which could be clustered under a broader label. At this time it was found some specific extracts could be linked to broader categories already formed but some new categories emerged as well.

Dornyei (2007) suggests that revising a code can be done by returning to the original transcripts and recoding them according to the new categories. If the majority of extracts fit the new codes, it can be seen as a sign of the validity of the code. Therefore, the researcher looked into the categories and regrouped them as well as creating new categories. The next step of the analysis was to arrange the coded data into themes for analysis. These themes were then analysed, segmented into smaller parts and supported by a review of relevant literature from the literature review. The following sections offer a comprehensive description of the content analysis and the way in which it is used in this research.

The researcher began the coding procedure while reviewing a transcript from each interview, and decided to use coding for the data analysis. This was borne out of a need to reveal the participant's points of view. Notes were made and comments put in the margins of the transcript while reading it.

Charmaz (2006) argues that openness in initial coding helps the analysis to explore the data and lets new ideas emerge. During this time it was decided to analyse and code interviews using segments word by word and line by line. After additional codes were given from the raw data, the researcher searched for links between codes to create new categories or discover whether the existing categories were appropriate. A list of codes was developed as a guide, in which subcategories as well as some new classes appeared. This process was repeated with the transcript from the second interview and so on. Once the list of categories from this transcript was created, the researcher compared the two and merged them. The process continued until

all the associations in all interviews had been analysed and the final list of categories and subcategories emerged.

#### **4.11 Ethical considerations.**

Wellington (2003) defines ethics as “...the moral principles, guiding conducts, which are held by a group or even a profession” (p. 54). Ethical considerations therefore were at the forefront of the research in order to uphold rights of participants. Saunders; Lewis and Thornhill (2007) refer to ethics of research as “the appropriateness of the researchers’ behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of the study, or are affected by it”. It should not be forgotten however, the freedom to participate must be an aspect of ethics consideration in research.

According to Adekeye (2011) “...The principle of voluntary participation, requires people not be coerced into participating in research.” (p. 34). With this in mind, an attempt was made to encourage an increase in the response rate for the interviews. However, to address all the ethics, the researcher made the aims of this study clear to all participants. The results were analysed by giving respect to their ideas, views and attitudes, and if the participants became disinterested in the research, they were given the chance to opt out.

The main research tool of this study was based on semi structured interview questions. There were meetings with participants before beginning the interview process in order to explain and clarify whatever they wished to ask about. Before collecting data the researcher explained ethical issues such as the aims of the research, the issues to be explored and the sponsors of the research. Moreover the researcher gave all interviewees the relevant research information. This information comprised the identity of the researcher, the purpose of the research as well as the nature of the information the interviewee would be expected to provide. In addition, interviewees were assured that no interview questions would touch on sensitive political or personal matters, and they were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity. It was explicitly stated that any information given was to be used exclusively for academic purposes. Moreover,

the researcher ensured that names of participants were coded so that no one could identify them. The letter sent to each participant gave all the above information, making sure that it would remain strictly confidential (see appendix 5).

#### **4.12 Summary of the Chapter.**

This chapter described the methodology used in this research. The research approach, paradigm and design used were presented. A detailed description of the processes involved in the collection of data was also provided. The following chapter presents data, analysis and findings of this research.

Utmost care has been given in selecting the methodology of research - qualitative research. The research was conducted in such a manner that the primary data has been collected without losing the originality and transcribed simultaneously. The research focused on the special schools and public schools to meet the required objectives without any bias. Information regarding inclusive education programme was obtained from the teachers of selected schools.

Sample assessments maintained a high level of precision and reliability, pertaining to both research participants and the research context. Interviews were conducted to provide the researcher with true and precise data in the process of study. Having sought assistance of Radnor, the researcher developed a framework to analyse the qualitative data. Based on Tesch's eight-step system the information was prepared and deleted ambiguous data, arranged data in chronological order or according to subject. From the whole bulk of raw data, a lot of notes and reviews helped in getting the refined research products.

# CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

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## 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of this research, which explores teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting students with disabilities in Libya. The research was conducted in four different areas in Libya. Data for this research was collected from 36 teachers at different schools in Libya. Twelve of the teachers were from special schools, twelve were from primary schools and twelve were from secondary schools.

The following section provides clear information on the qualifications, experience and duties of the respondents. Such data becomes helpful throughout the analytical process method because it notifies the researcher of the caliber of the respondents.

## 5.1 Interviewees background information.

Identifying the characteristics of the respondents was not part of the specific objectives of the study. However, it is necessary to present this data for the reader to understand the background of the respondents. Demographic data about the teachers also is important because significant relationships could potentially be established between the variables and the interview data. The variables included the participants' gender, qualifications, and background experience with disabilities. The data will be presented in both table and text form. Data for this objective was obtained from semi-structured interviews with 36 teachers.

Table (5.1) presents background on the teachers in terms of gender, qualifications, and years of teaching, background, experience with disabilities and the disabilities of students that the teachers were teaching. Table (5.1) shows that the large majority of the teachers were males (N=28) and (N=8) were females from the 36 teachers who participated in this research. Thirty one teachers held a Teachers' Diploma and 5 held a Bachelor's degree. Years of teaching experience ranged between six and 15 years. Most teachers had background experiences with

children with disabilities; only one teacher had no background experience. All those interviewed had students with disabilities in their classroom at the time of the interviews.

**Table 5.1 The Interviewees' backgrounds**

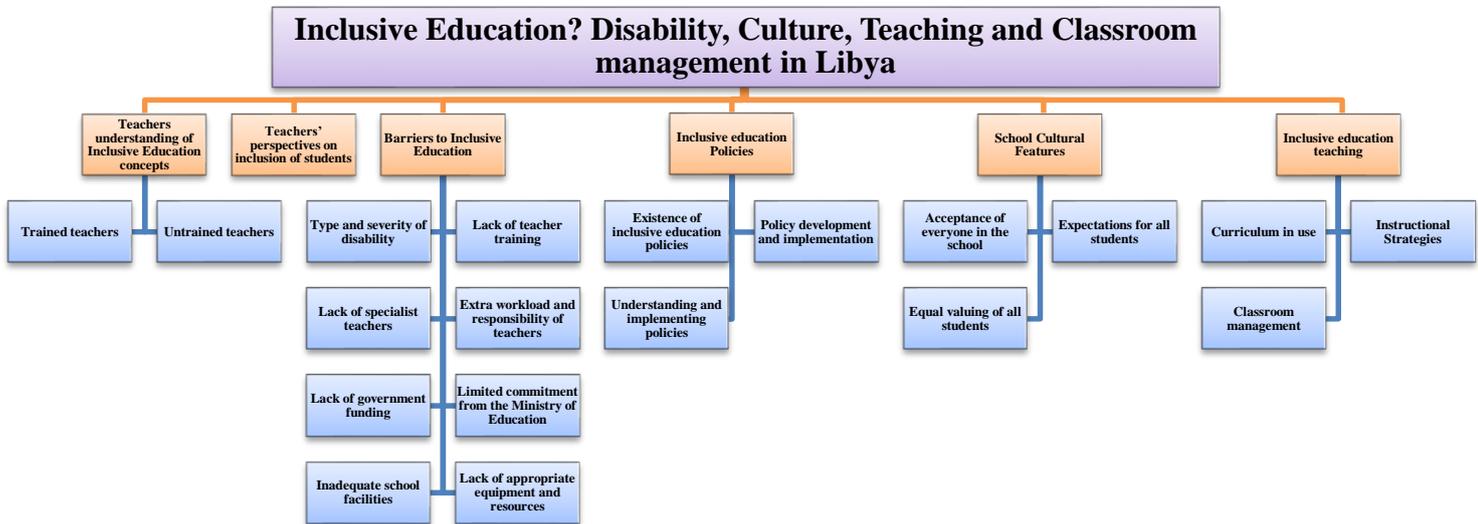
<b>Gender</b>				
	special schools	primary schools	Secondary schools	Total
Male	9	9	10	28
Female	3	3	2	8
Total	12	12	12	36
<b>Qualifications</b>				
	special schools	primary schools	secondary schools	Total
Bachelor's Degree	2	1	2	5
Teachers' Diploma	10	11	10	31
Total	12	12	12	36
<b>Years of teaching</b>				
	special schools	primary schools	secondary schools	Total
6 -10 years	3	2	-	5
11 -15 years	9	9	12	30
Over 15 years	-	1	-	1
Total	12	12	12	36
<b>Disability experience</b>				
	special schools	primary schools	secondary schools	Total
Yes	12	8	7	27
No	-	4	5	9
Total	12	12	12	36
<b>Do you have disabled students in your classroom?</b>				
	special schools	primary schools	secondary schools	Total
Yes	12	12	12	36
No	-	-	-	-
Total	12	12	12	36

The interviewees' data seems to be comparatively broad on this subject. Most teachers spoke confidently and appeared to have no objection to being recorded. However, there were some instances when they felt what they said might have implications and could possibly affect them at some future point if it was publically announced; so they asked the researcher to make sure that their anonymity was protected. On this point, as the interviewer, the researcher ensured that objectivity was maintained and did not allow the public to affect the interview data. Moreover, several interviewees, whom the researcher was meeting for the first time, were also open and willing to talk about their routines, roles and opinions without reluctance. This reflected the approachable nature of the participants and their willingness to express opinions. They were a useful source of inside information and, in terms of quality; their interviews are one of the main strengths of this thesis. Most of the participants agreed to be acknowledged by name or position in the study. The next section outlines the organization of the data.

## **5.2 Organization of data.**

The feedback from the interviewees was placed under main themes. This section combines the data obtained from the 36 teachers' perceptions during fieldwork into themes and sub- themes, within which the participants' perceptions have been identified.

**Figure (5.1) thematic analysis of qualitative data obtained in the interviews**



### 5.3 Teachers' understanding of Inclusive Education concepts.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers held diverse personal views and understanding about what constitutes inclusive education and disabilities. Carrington (1999) found that teachers' ideas and knowledge on inclusive education concepts influenced the way they were implementing the inclusive programmes. However, in the current study the teachers' understanding and knowledge about the concepts varied depending on whether they had been exposed to the terms prior to the current study. It was revealed that teachers who had attended college training, and had further study opportunities, were most able to define and explain what constitutes inclusive education (Panda, 1991).

Table (5.2) shows the number of teachers who had received training in teaching students with disabilities and the number of those who had not received any formal training. As shown in table (5.2) the majority of the high school teachers (N=10) did not receive any training about teaching students with disabilities, and only two teachers had received training. The results also

show, that only three of twelve teachers from primary schools had undertaken training in teaching students with disabilities. In this context, results of the interviews revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly believed that the lack of good training is a negative factor and that increasing/providing good training would be a positive factor in implementing inclusive education, and that training should be made available.

**Table (5.2) Training Opportunities**

Teachers	Do not receive formal Training	Receive formal Training	Total
Special School	-	12	12
Primary School	9	3	12
High School	10	2	12
Total	19	17	36

### **5.3.1 Trained teachers.**

It was evident that most teachers who had been introduced to inclusive education concepts either through their college training, further study opportunities, or in-service training, were able to define inclusive education concepts more appropriately than those who had no idea at all prior to the current study. This is illustrated in the words of the following respondents:

“Inclusive education is regardless of anything like students who have disabilities or students who do not belong to mainstream; they stay together with mainstream students in the same classroom, where we teach them all similarly and study together in order to live together.” (ST1)

“Inclusive education means bringing them together or putting them alongside those mainstream children in the same school where they can be learning together with the mainstream children. Those people with special needs can learn together with the mainstream children.” (ST3)

Most teachers who had attended inclusive education training were able to understand the concept whereby all children were brought together in the same school/classroom and taught. Thus, Mentis, Quinn and Ryba (2005) argued that training is an important aspect in the promotion of inclusive education. However, in the current study, it seems that although the teachers had gone through some form of training in inclusive education, the implementation aspect at school and classroom level was lacking. One reason was that there was a lack of

continuity through staff development programmes (Beh-Pajoooh, 1992; Shimman, 1990). Another reason was because the school leadership was not proactive towards fostering inclusion (Chazan, 1994). Teachers often took their prior learning for granted and therefore, their ideas were not implemented at the school and classroom levels (Center & Ward, 1987). This grim situation was contrary to what other inclusive studies found, where training positively influenced inclusion of children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (Buell et al., 1999; Dickens-Smith, 1995; Van-Reusen, Shoho & Baker, 2000).

### **5.3.2 Untrained teachers.**

The teachers who did not have any inclusive education background defined the concepts in this manner:

“Inclusive education ... no I don't know what it is? May be something related to giving education particularly for the disabled children.” (PST9)

“Inclusive education may be something related to giving education especially for the disabled children.” (SST3)

Conversely, teachers who had little or no knowledge about inclusive education concepts were confused when defining the terms. This group of staff members defined the concepts in terms of training, education and seeing people with disabilities in their communities and schools. The study suggests that teacher education and professional development programmes focusing on inclusive education were neglected. It is through teacher in-service training and preparedness that full inclusion is reported to be successful (Avramidis et al., 2000; Center et al., 1987; Destefano, Shriner & Lloyd, 2001; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). However, this was not the case in the schools that took part in the study. It was revealed that teacher education was minimal, or in most cases, non-existent. Due to the teachers' lack of understanding of the basic concepts of inclusive education, they appeared less able to cater for the specific needs of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools/classrooms (Taylor, Richards, Goldstein & Schilit, 1997). Baltes et al., (2006); Magnusson & Stattin,(2006); Thomas, (2005); Taylor et al. (1998) therefore strongly argued that in order for inclusive education to be successful, teachers should be trained in how to modify the classroom structures, curriculum differentiation, and selection of appropriate teaching and assessment strategies. The consequence of lack of knowledge in

the current study was that teachers' actions and practices were not geared towards meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools.

#### **5.4 Teachers' perspectives on inclusion of students.**

This section focuses on the findings of the study in relation to the first part of the first research question: what teachers' perspectives and attitudes have an effect on the inclusion or exclusion of students with disabilities in their schools or classrooms? All of the 36 participants who took part in the interviews supported inclusive education. However, they all agreed that students with profound disabilities should be educated in special education settings. Students with profound disabilities are those students who needed more care and management as well as those who needed planned support such as wheelchairs to help with their movement around the school.

20 of the 36 teachers interviewed (60%) showed that some factors have been identified as to why not all students with disabilities should be included in the mainstream schools; these factors include communication barriers, differences in teaching styles, lack of available support teachers and unavailability of appropriate equipment and resources.

Most of the teachers said that the idea of inclusion was very good because it broadened the minds of students with disabilities and it also gave the students an idea of what was happening out there in the world. Representative of the reasons for this attitude is the following extract:

When students with disabilities are separated in their special education their experiences are limited to their peer groups of disabilities and they do not know how to interact with able bodied people. (SST2)

Another five teachers had negative attitudes towards educational programmes. In relation to this point, one of the teachers made the following point:

“Only the students who are able to cope and be involved in academic activities should be included in the mainstream schools.” (ST4)

His view was also confirmed by another teacher who stated that:

“Not all students could be included in mainstream schools so special schools should still be there to meet the educational needs of students who have profound disabilities.” (ST7)

Three teachers had negative attitudes towards communication. In relation to this point, one of the teachers made the following point:

“With students who were deaf and mute, and were intellectually impaired, communication would be a barrier, and unless the teaching style in mainstream classrooms changed, students with disabilities would not have their needs met very well”. (PST2)

Another teacher said that:

“It’s a good thing to include everyone into the mainstream school, but for the severe ones, it’s good to stay in a special school”. (PST5)

Differences in pedagogical styles used in mainstream schools and special schools were cited as one of the reasons why students with severe disabilities should be educated in special educational settings. As one teacher said:

“The way students with disabilities were taught in the special education and the way they were taught in the mainstream schools were quite different. In the special schools, teaching is mostly one to one interaction whereas in the mainstream it is a whole class teaching approach”. (PST7)

In the opinion of another teacher:

“In mainstream classrooms students worked on their own and did things independently with very little support from the class teacher, and with this approach of teaching, students with disabilities would not be able to cope well in the classroom”. (SST5)

The availability of a support person to assist a child with a disability in the class was also stated. One interviewee reported that:

“If no support teacher was there to assist the students with severe disabilities in her class, the students will be left on their own most of the time as there were thirty other students to teach and attend to”. (PST11)

His view was also confirmed by another teacher who stated that:

“Not all children with disabilities should be included in mainstream schools, only those who have the potential to develop more and cope with the work given”. (PST12)

The availability of equipment and training of teachers to assist students with disabilities in schools and classrooms were also reported by teachers as one of the negative attitudes. As one teacher said:

“Inclusive education will be good for all children with disabilities. However there will be some students who will need their own special classrooms and curriculum that suits the disability that they had”. (SST7)

In the views of this teacher:

“The disability would be severe for some students; this requires good training for the teachers, in addition to the necessary equipment in the educational process”. (SST11)

Inclusion was good for all students but this depended on the facilities that schools had. As one teacher noted:

“For students with disabilities to be included the government should take an active role by providing the facilities and training for all teachers in how to teach and handle all the various disabilities that students with disabilities have”. (ST6)

His view was confirmed by another teacher, who stated that:

“The extra workload and responsibilities that teachers have in schools is a barrier for inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools”. (PST10)

In general, teachers’ perspectives on the inclusion of children with disabilities were examined during the interviews. The results of this research showed that all the teachers supported inclusive education and agreed that inclusive education was good. However, all the teachers said that students with severe disabilities should be educated in special education settings. The ability to cope in the mainstream schools was shown in the study to be an important factor for inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools in Libya. The majority of the teachers said that only the students who were able to cope and be involved in academic activities should be included in the mainstream schools.

Inclusive education means the full inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling, and that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their abilities or disabilities (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2005). The literature shows that all children, no matter how severe their disabilities are, or how intensive their needs are, belong in the general education classroom and can be accommodated in the mainstream class in their neighbourhood schools, the schools they would be attending if they did not have a disability (Jenkinson, 1997;

Peters, 2003; Smith, Polloway, Patton et al., 2008). There is also sufficient research evidence to suggest that inclusion even of children with the most severe disabilities can work if schools have a culture of shared values and are genuinely committed to improving their practices (Loreman, et al., 2005).

## **5.5 Barriers to Inclusive Education.**

Many barriers have been identified that were related to inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream school such as type and severity of disability, lack of teacher training, lack of specialist teachers, extra workload and responsibility of teachers, lack of government funding, limited commitment from the Ministry of Education, inadequate school facilities and lack of appropriate equipment and resources.

### **5.5.1 Type and severity of disability.**

According to the interview data all the teachers identify type and severity of disability as one of the factors that have affected the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. Three teachers from the special schools said that these schools are known as the schools for speech impairment and hearing impairment. However, the schools only accept students who have speech impairments and hearing impairments. The following extract is representative of this:

“The school only accepts students who have speech impairment and hearing impairment, so students with other disabilities were referred to other special schools that suited their disabilities”. (ST1)

All the teachers in the primary schools and the secondary schools said their schools only accepted students with mild disabilities. As one teacher noted:

“A student with a mild disability is a student whose disability does not affect his or her achievement largely and is not significant. For example, the child does not need any equipment at school”. (PST8)

His view was also confirmed by another teacher who stated that:

My school does not have suitable services such as ramps and special toilets to meet the disability of students in wheelchairs and other severe disabilities. (SST10)

One teacher also stated:

“We cannot accept students with disabilities such as speech impairment to a large degree, and students in wheelchairs, in our schools. As well as this, we accept students that have to access their classrooms by walking and it would be difficult to have students in wheelchairs in the school as there are no special provisions for their disabilities”. (PST3)

However, this research found that schools accepted students depending on the type of disability they had and the severity of their disabilities. These findings from the interviews have confirmed previous findings from the literature review. For example, Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, (2000); Forlin, (1995); and Opdal, Wormnaes & Habayeb, (2001) observed that the nature and severity of children’s needs and disabilities strongly influenced teachers’ disposition towards inclusive practices.

### **5.5.2 Lack of teacher training.**

This research found that the training that teachers had at their respective teacher training institutions was inadequate in teaching students with disabilities in schools. The interview data suggested that teacher training was a factor in teachers’ negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in schools. Most teachers said that in order for them to implement inclusive education, they should receive education and training about this. This study showed that all the teachers had been trained to Diploma level except for five teachers who held a Bachelor’s degree. However, no teachers were specifically teaching students with disabilities, and they lacked qualifications to teach students with disabilities in schools. However, when teachers were asked whether they had ever been involved in any training courses, they were also asked how they had received this training.

For example, in the context of the lack of training, one of the teachers stated that:

“I have been in this school for 15 years, but I have not been sent for further studies or training on inclusive education”. (SST6)

Although most of the teachers in special schools had training in teaching students with disabilities as shown in table (5.2), the teachers said the course did not prepare them sufficiently for the reality they faced with children with disabilities in their class. As one teacher said:

“During our training, special education was being introduced, but the content was mostly on special education in general with no specific mention of the varying disabilities and how to deal with the students with disabilities in the classroom”. (ST2)

Another teacher stated:

“No training in teaching students with disabilities at all, so just taught the students with disabilities the same way I taught the non-disabled students in my class. I interacted with the students so we began to understand them and learned how to teach them better”. (PST6)

These teachers defined the concepts in terms of training, education and seeing people with disabilities in their schools. The study suggests that teacher education and professional development programmes focusing on inclusive education were neglected. It is through teacher in-service training and preparedness that full inclusion is reported to be successful (Avramidis et al., 2000; Center et al., 1987; Destefano, Shriner & Lloyd, 2001; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). However, this was not the case in the schools that took part in the study. It was revealed that teacher education and professional development were minimal, or in most cases, non-existent. Due to the teachers' lack of understanding of the basic concepts of special and inclusive education, they appeared less able to cater for the specific needs of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools/classrooms (Taylor, Richards, Goldstein & Schilit, 1997).

The literature shows that it is unfair and unrealistic to include students with disabilities in general education in the absence of training teachers in the required skills to meet the special learning and behavioural needs of students as creatively and productively as for mainstream students (Flem & Keller, 2005). Teacher training institutions should, therefore, consider in their programmes practical experiences with inclusive education in positive and supportive environments, and opportunities for students to experience success in inclusive education (Loreman, Forlin & Sharma, 2007).

### **5.5.3 Lack of specialist teachers.**

This research found that the negative attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities were also due to the lack of specialist teachers and support services in schools. For instance, students with hearing impairments needed sign language teachers and interpreters. The research showed that schools did not have these specialist teachers and there were no support services available for both teachers and students in schools.

One of the key points to make the implementation of inclusive education successful depends on the teacher's education. Many scholars in the inclusive education area point out that the teacher is an important key in making the implementation of inclusive education successful (Ainscow, 2007; Booth et al., 2002). Therefore, schools and the Department of Education in Libya should be improving teachers' competency in teaching disabled children, particularly for the teachers who do not have an educational background or experience with disabled children. The socialisation of an inclusive education program is introduced to the teacher who is teaching in an inclusive school. As one teacher said:

“The lack of teachers who specialize in teaching children who were visually impaired or who had hearing impairment is a major cause for not accepting students with disabilities, in addition to the lack of special centres to train teachers and through which teachers are trained on how to deal and communicate with deficits in a scientific manner, such as visual impairment and hearing impairment”. (PST1)

The statement above is also supported by the teacher who said:

“We have children with hearing impairment who did not continue in school because there were no specialist teachers in hearing impairment to even communicate with those students, so we could not provide them with anything”. (SST4)

Another teacher stated:

“Those special schools can communicate with students with disabilities by sign language, because they have teachers able to learn, and this is not available in mainstream schools, especially in the early stages of studies”. (SST5)

#### **5.5.4 Extra workload and responsibility of teachers.**

This research revealed that teachers found it difficult to have students with disabilities in their classes because of the extra responsibilities and extra workload that they have in the school apart from their classroom teaching responsibilities. Teachers revealed that on top of their classroom teaching responsibilities, they were responsible for other school activities such as sports and other extracurricular activities. They confirmed that having students with disabilities in the class would be an additional responsibility and would mean additional workload. Six of the teachers said that in their classes they had to do a lot of separate activities at the same time.

“They said that with the different disabilities of the students and with no support teacher or teacher helper in the class, they easily got tired and were very exhausted at the end of the day; they added that they have to teach the same thing over and over again before the students could actually grasp what you were trying to teach, so it is very difficult to teach these students”. (SST11)

The views of this teacher:

“They had to put in more effort to ensure that the hearing impaired students in their classes have access to all the notes that were given in class. For example when we dictate some of the lessons of history, we should write each lesson on the blackboard in order to make sure that hearing impaired students may understand everything that is being said about the lesson, so that a topic that normally took a day or two to cover now took a week or more”. (PST9)

### **5.5.5 Lack of government funding.**

One of the most common arguments against the movement towards inclusion in education is financial and resource consideration (Lynch, 2001). The challenge of these arguments is the development of effective financial strategies that would support inclusive education, because inclusive education is a part of the educational system, or as an additional programme in the government programme. Therefore, making provision for inclusion will blow the education budget and increase the unit of cost provision. It is common sense that those with more severe and complex needs will require additional resources, because they had to have more educational needs fulfilled. McLeskey & Waldron, (2000) agrees that inclusion is expensive to implement at the first stage but it should become cost effective over time. This is also supported by Chow et al., (1999) who stated that inclusive education is a golden opportunity to reduce the cost of special education services which are more expensive than mainstream education. The cost of special education services is about 2.3 times the cost of mainstream education (Chaikin, Danielson, & Brauen, 1993). With inclusive education, they not only get their right to education but also the necessary education to live a dignified life. In the long term, it will pay off in terms of avoidance of dependency costs for families, communities and societies.

Lack of government funding was identified in this research as a contributing factor to the reluctance of schools and teachers in having students with disabilities in their schools and classrooms. One of the teachers mentioned that:

“Without the government support and extra funding, the process of inclusive education in Libya will take longer to achieve than anticipated. Teachers predicted that it would take longer for inclusive education to materialize in Libya and for students with disabilities to be fully included in all schools in Libya”. (PST3)

Another teacher said:

“Disabled student needed extra resources and support from the government, because we need more teaching staff and must buy appropriate resources or build extra classrooms that would accommodate all students with disabilities; schools will need extra funding to restructure their

school buildings to cater for students who have visual impairments and students in wheelchairs. Because of financial difficulties and lack of funding, schools will find it hard to restructure and make their schools conducive to the needs of students with disabilities”. (SST6)

#### **5.5.6 Limited commitment from the Ministry of Education.**

With inadequate funding from the government, the Ministry of Education also had limited funds and human resources to visit schools and monitor the inclusion of students with disabilities. Teachers therefore noted the limited commitment from the Ministry of Education as a contributing factor to the non-inclusion of students with disabilities in their schools. Since the Ministry of Education in Libya failed to visit the schools to monitor the education of students with disabilities, schools and teachers did not see it as a priority to include these students.

All of the teachers in primary schools and secondary schools said education officials from the Ministry of Education rarely visited the schools to see how schools were progressing with the education of students with disabilities. There was no monitoring or evaluation of how successful inclusion was. No special attention was paid to students with disabilities. Therefore, these students were like any other students in the school, without any special provisions or support on the part of the Ministry of Education. As one teacher said:

“So far no one from the Ministry of Education had visited to see if there were any students with disabilities in these schools, before inclusive education is officially implemented in all schools, the officers in the Ministry of Education should themselves be committed and be aware of what inclusive education is all about. The Ministry of Education should consult teachers and listen to the recommendations before integrating all students with disabilities in the mainstream schools”. (SST9)

According to Foreman (2005), the tendency for those in authority in the education hierarchy to issue directives and leave it to the teachers to implement with no follow up to determine efficacy of practice, is not uncommon in schools.

#### **5.5.7 Inadequate school facilities.**

The challenge for government and schools to successfully implement inclusive education is to make the situation become conducive to the teaching and learning process. Therefore, to support that situation the government should be providing all the facilities such as infrastructures, human resources and learning materials.

This research found that schools did not have the appropriate facilities and provisions for the successful inclusion of students with disabilities. Teachers revealed that their schools did not have ramps or proper toilet facilities to accommodate students in wheelchairs. As the teacher mentioned that:

“There are many schools that have been built without any consideration for students with disabilities and the school environments are not contributing to and welcoming for students with disabilities”. (ST10)

Some of the schools did not dare to change the building structure because they were not allowed to do that by the Department of Education in Libya. That has become the reason for some schools to refuse some disabled children, even though a school has been appointed as an inclusive school. Two teachers mentioned that:

“Many of the schools have no suitable corridors and are poorly equipped to provide access for all students particularly those in wheelchairs and those with severe physical disabilities”. (PST9)

Another teacher said:

“Most of the schools have two or three floor buildings and offer no provisions for students with disabilities such as those with wheelchairs and physical impairments. As a consequence most of these students have no access to secondary schools”. (SST7)

Some of the hindrances in achieving inclusive goals in schools were the shortcomings in building design which have similar effects, of making access to school buildings and movement inside them. Also structural designs that fail to take the mobility of disabled people into account have been identified within the social and environmental model of disability as affecting their enjoyment of other facilities in the building such as toilets, restaurants, library, classrooms, and bookshops. Sapon-Shevin strongly discussed about these common issues (2007). A much reflected plan and a human right approach will legalize the structural designs of school buildings as easily accessible to all facilities adhering health and safety policies.

The problem that is faced by schools in implementing inclusive education is to provide the facilities and infrastructure for disabled children. This problem is not only faced by Libya but also by other countries. Research show that the facilities in schools are the major issues in most

of the countries (Pivik. J. et al., 2002; Porter. G, 2001). Therefore, coordination among educational institutions is an important aspect in developing inclusive educational programme.

From descriptions of access to the teaching material above, inclusive schools depend on the government funding to support it. The existence of media and teaching material is important for the learning process in inclusive education. Loreman, (2007) and Ainscow, (1995) stated that resources are the main causes of the schools being unprepared to conduct inclusive education in some countries, because it is not easy to change the school systems from mainstream school to inclusive school without any suitable facilities that support the teaching and learning process. Besides, creativity in fulfilling the implementation of inclusive education requires school capacity.

#### **5.5.8 Lack of appropriate equipment and resources.**

This research also found that students with disabilities were often neglected during certain class activities because of the lack of appropriate equipment and resources. Students with disabilities needed extensive resources and equipment to help them with their learning. As one of the teachers said:

For example, in Science, the equipment used in primary and secondary schools was not the kind that students with visual impairments used. (PST2)

Another teacher also said:

With the lack of proper equipment, students with disabilities at our school did not contribute in Physical Education or sports, because the school does not have the proper sports equipment to include them. The students preferred to stay in the classroom and they did something else while the rest of the students went out for outdoor activities. (PST9)

The process of inclusion in many countries will take a long time to improve because of lack of resources (Mohay & Reid, 2006; Rouse, 2006). For teachers to do their work effectively there must be adequate and appropriate resources available. Many students who have severe disabilities rely on assistive technology to aid them with their movements and learning. This research shows no indication of use of any technology for students with disabilities in the mainstream schools, such as computers to assist students in their learning.

## **5.6 School Cultural Features.**

This theme deals with the analysis which was based on the second research objective of this study. From the examination of the interview, school culture emerged as a major theme. Four sub-themes emerged within this theme, and they were named acceptance of everyone in the school, expectations for all students, equal valuing of all students and collaboration and support provisions. These will be discussed below.

### **5.6.1 Acceptance of everyone in the school.**

Most teachers generally felt that it was a right for all children to be educated in the mainstream classroom. The interview data further revealed that they considered all children were to be included in the mainstream classroom. The following quotation supports what one teacher thought about the acceptance of all children in the mainstream classroom:

“Every child has the right to learn, whether able or disabled. They have the right to learn so whenever they are brought to our school, we accept them, especially those disabled ones. We are teachers and do not say no. We have to take them in and teach them together with the mainstream children”. (ST7)

Another teacher made a very similar comment when he said:

“Like a little boy who has a bad leg and comes to school late but I let him in the classroom even when he is late to school and he is still allowed to come to our school”.(SST7)

A teacher who had some years of teaching experience revealed a similar viewpoint and stated:

“What we do is we include everyone in the classroom, teach them in the same way in the same classroom and deal with them according to their own classroom needs. So we don’t have any special training or special education teachers to take care of these children”. (PST3)

The teachers interviewed had a view that all children were accepted into their schools and classrooms; some teachers saw acceptance based on personal sympathy and compassion. This may be illustrated by the following comments:

“I feel sorry when I compare myself and the lives of the kids today. When they do not do well in the classroom, I feel sad about it I sympathise with them when they do not learn and thus accept them as who they are”. (ST11)

“Yes, I feel sympathy, I feel sorry you know to see them like this. So I bring them in and treat them the same way as others”. (PST12)

However, this study suggested that the schools were considered as social institutions where all children were accepted. That meant children with disabilities were already part of the school and there was limited rejection, except for those children who were difficult to include. According to the literature, what was happening in the schools was not full inclusion. Most teachers were attempting to be proactive towards promoting inclusive education in their schools. However, as supported by other research findings, they lacked appropriate training and leadership direction to foster inclusive education practices (O'Brian & Ryba, 2005; Dickens-Smith, 1995; Center et al., 1987).

The study further indicated that though all children were enrolled at the schools under study, children were perceived to be detached from the teachers. That meant children's learning needs and abilities were minimally considered and hence, the teachers' practices were not focused on individual children's learning needs. In the process of discharging their professional duties, there was evidence of teachers' superiority over the children. However, the acceptance of all children into the mainstream schools was based on the rights principle (Artiles & Dyson, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Mittler, 2005). Fulcher (1989) states that the rights discourse attempts to deviate from practices associated with discrimination, exclusion and oppression. The notion of rights was also evidenced when they accepted all children, whether with disabilities or not, in the mainstream schools under study. UNESCO – Salamanca Statement (1994, p, 2) also advocates that all children have basic human rights to education and thus must be recognised by giving equal educational opportunities in the mainstream school and classroom.

### **5.6.2 Expectations for all students.**

The interview data revealed that most teachers expected that children with disabilities were to be educated in special schools. They held a view that children with disabilities would have a different curriculum and they perceived disability curriculum in terms of having braille and assistive communication aids like computers available or in use. From the interviews, this teacher from a special school who had some ideas or skills on special and inclusive education has a different view.

“When I started teaching I was expecting some students with disabilities in my class and so I was prepared to teach them like others”. (ST8)

Another teacher commented that:

“In the college I attended, I learnt about including students with disabilities in my teaching programme so I expected them to be there and I am actually teaching a child with hearing problems”. (ST12)

Due to the education reform, most teachers had a view that they were working towards achieving a two-fold purpose in their profession. Firstly, it was to teach children so that those able children who managed to pass the exams would pursue further studies to high school and eventually to tertiary institutions and then to jobs. Their second expectation was to provide students with basic ‘life’ skills so that when they return to their homes if they did not pass the exams, they could make use of these skills to live productive lives. These views are supported by the following teacher:

“Through the outcomes-based education, we expect some students to return to their homes if they do not pass the exams. Therefore, we are preparing them through academic work as well as the life skills for them to be prepared and either go through the education system or return to the home level”. (ST5)

Another teacher commented that:

“The outcomes-based education has really challenged us to teach both academic and life-skills for students so that they are prepared to settle in when they leave school. We are concentrating on academic subjects as well as the practical skills for students to take back home”. (ST9)

However, the teachers expected all students to meet certain testing criteria in order to be eligible. There appeared to be a lack of understanding of the different types of disabilities, their causes and the contexts that influenced their learning and achievements. It was revealed that the teachers held differing expectations from all students. As well as acknowledging the values associated with inclusion, which was already a practice in their schools, most teachers perceived the education of children with disabilities in the form of a separate curriculum and other assistive tools. They also expected children with disabilities to be educated in institutions like special schools. They considered that having separate institutions would meet the specific needs of children with disabilities. These views were held along the lay discourse. Nonetheless, the basic question that could be posed in this analysis was why did the teachers enroll the student with disabilities and claim that they were already included in their schools and classrooms? It could be inferred that though children with disabilities were already included in the schools under study, there was no full inclusion as there was a lack of appropriate support provision in the schools (Skidmore, 2004; Wood, 2006). Mitchell (2005) also argues that

inclusive education must be provided for all children, with age appropriate aids and individualized practices in terms of curriculum and instruction.

### **5.6.3 Equal valuing of all students.**

Most teachers who took part in the interviews had a view that all children need to be educated as a basic right. They felt that despite the children's individual problems, shortcomings, and difficulties that may be associated with either disabilities or through other means, all children should be respected, valued and given equal opportunities for education. One teacher stated that:

“I try to give equal opportunities to education to all children, whether they are disabled or not”.  
(PST6)

Nearly all the respondents viewed the valuing of all children and providing education to all as being based on the fact that all children should be treated equally as human beings. This link is illustrated in the following quote by a teacher:

“As human beings, we have to know that children are also human beings and we have to treat them like how you would treat your own children and yourself”. (SST12)

Similarly, a teacher made the following remarks:

“Those teachers who are here in this school know that they are Muslims and we have to act in an Islamic way. We can't play bias games or ill-treat any of the children that we are teaching. Though they make me angry sometimes, I have to treat them equally and that is part of Islamic belief”.  
(PST10)

On the other hand, those teachers had differing viewpoints about giving equal opportunities to all students. For example, a teacher stated:

“Yes, I know that students should be treated equally but not all the time as they are often at fault”.  
(PST7)

Three quarters of the teachers considered that the problems that were associated with children were of their own making. One teacher held a view that:

“Students make so many mistakes and I get angry and sometimes I nearly hit them. So I calm down and help those who are good”. (PST3)

However, the study revealed that equal valuing of all children was a practice that was already in existence in the schools. The teachers considered that all children had to be respected, valued and educated in the mainstream schools and classrooms. However, the study revealed two vital considerations in terms of valuing all children. Firstly, the Islamic belief which considered that all children, whether with disabilities or not, had to be treated equally in their teaching and learning practices. This belief was considered to be held along the Islamic teaching principles where everyone was loved and treated equally. Secondly, other teachers viewed the difficulties and disabilities faced by children as that of the children’s own making. This was the deficit and/or medical model (Fulcher, 1989; More et al., 1999; O’Brian & Ryba, 2005). Children were always considered to be at fault and the teachers’ own shortcomings and weaknesses were not acknowledged. There was a certain degree of blame from the teachers placed on the children with disabilities. This was a stereotypical connotation held by the staff members and this had negatively impacted on their practices in terms of meeting the learning needs of children with disabilities in the schools (Foreman, 2005; Fulcher, 1989).

### **5.7 Inclusive education policies.**

Inclusive education recognises that all children, despite their abilities, disabilities or other shortcomings, are to be educated in the mainstream classroom. This is supported by relevant education policies that take into consideration the need to support and celebrate student diversity, provide education for all learners, and seek to ensure that equal educational and social opportunities are made available to all children in a given locale. From the interview data, it was apparent that most of the teachers were not aware of the existence of school policies. However, the data revealed various viewpoints held by the teachers respectively. From the pool of data, two major themes emerged, which are inclusive education policies and functional practices for the classroom. Each of these themes is discussed below, with relevant excerpts derived from the interview data.

The interview data revealed that most teachers considered that education should be provided to all learners. The following subthemes emerged from the interview data: existence of inclusive education policies, policy development and implementation and differences in understanding and implementing policies. These sub-themes are explained in the following section.

### **5.7.1 Existence of inclusive education policies.**

It was seen from the interview data that almost all of the teachers who took part in the study were unaware of the existence of inclusive education policies, whether at the school level or generally in education in Libya. As one teacher commented:

“I don’t know much about the education policies in the Ministry of Education but children have the right to education. As far as I know, I have never seen or heard of any inclusive education policies”. (PST4)

Nearly all the teachers who took part in the interviews made similar comments about the non-existence of inclusive education policies. The following extracts explain what the teachers perceived about the existence of inclusive education policies:

“I have not heard about the existence of either inclusive education policies in the Ministry of Education. Even at the school level we do not have these policies and I do not know whose responsibility it is”. (PST9)

“I think there may be policies but in regard to inclusive education policies but I have never come across one. That’s why we are in dark and we really can’t do anything at the school level to follow these policies. And I don’t think we have such policies in place”. (SST1)

An experienced teacher who had been teaching for the past 20 years mentioned the following:

“We don’t have any policies so I can’t say anything for that but I am aware that this kind of programme exists. And the trainee teachers have background knowledge in that but they cannot exercise this, and they become classroom teachers only as there are no policies to support this in the schools”. (PST3)

Another teacher stated:

“I have not heard about the inclusive education policies. I think the principal is not telling us what to do. It may be because all of us don’t know how to make one and we have not seen any policies in this school”. (PST7)

However, the study revealed that though the inclusive education policy was already in existence at the Ministry of Education and despite the instructions to implement the policy, many of the teachers were not aware of its existence. From inferences, one reason was because the policy did not trickle down to the school level through appropriate communication channels. Peck, Hayden, Wandschneider, Peterson and Richarz (1989) established that inclusive practices may portray a negative ripple effect when the intended policies do not reach the intended contexts like schools. This situation was revealed in the current study by teachers who took some training on inclusive education, as well as those who did not. Even at the school levels, there were no inclusive education policy documents in existence to guide the teachers’ practices.

### **5.7.2 Policy development and implementation.**

The interview data revealed that the development of inclusive education policies was not well understood by the teachers. The conception of what constituted policy was also misconceived by the teachers. They thought of policy solely in terms of rules that govern the school or the classroom practices. For example, a teacher posited that:

“I really do not know about policies, but maybe it’s something to do with the rights of all children to be educated”. (SST8)

Similar sentiments were expressed by two teachers when they expressed that:

“In my school we really do not have inclusive education policies at the moment, but we are still looking into it. Maybe sooner or later we might have one because they might help us to develop inclusive education policies. The blame should also go to the Ministry of Education in Libya as they have not told us what to do in terms of policy development”. (PST2)

The second teacher made the following comment:

“The Ministry of Education did not tell us anything about inclusive education policies. We are also not aware of them. But we still allow all the children, whether with disabilities or not, to come to this school”. (PST12)

The data appears to reflect a culture of blame whereby the teachers shifted the responsibility and blame on to the Ministry of Education. However, the study suggested that the development and implementation of the inclusive education policies were not well understood by the teachers. Mentis et al. (2005) argued that the development of inclusive education policies is a step towards advocating the education of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools and classrooms. However, the study appeared to suggest that the vital aspect of what constitutes inclusive education policy was misunderstood by the teachers. They seemed to be not aware of how to develop such a policy. They perceived that the development and implementation of inclusive education policies were the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Conversely, O'Brian et al. (2005) strongly recommended that schools must develop school based policies to cater for the needs of a wide spectrum of children in inclusive schools.

### **5.7.3 Understanding and implementing policies.**

The data revealed a situation whereby policies were understood by teachers. However, whilst most teachers understood policies in terms of human rights and rights to education, others viewed it from the professional and moral perspectives. For instance one teacher stated that:

“As far as I know the education policy states that all children have the same rights to be educated in the school as other mainstream children”. (PST1)

Similar sentiments were expressed by another teacher when they expressed that:

“In my school we have a policy whereby all children can be educated and teachers must be prepared to teach them”. (SST9)

However, in reality the policies that teachers and school administrators were advocating were not written down or in document form. It was all rhetoric, which they only perceived in the mind. This was supported by a senior teacher who had been teaching for the past 15 years, who said:

“Though the education department talks about policies we are not sure of their existence in this school”. (SST11)

However, the teacher understood inclusive education policies from the perspective of human rights and rights to education. Inclusive education policies have to develop to foster the accommodation of all children regardless of their disabilities, race, gender and other disparities (Mentis et al., 2005; Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, the teachers reported that they had accepted all children into their schools and classrooms because it was the children's right to go to school and receive formal education. Though the teachers appeared to be unaware of the existence of any inclusive education policies that required all children to be given equal education opportunities, they nevertheless perceived that education was the children's right (Mentis et al., 2005). Connell (2004) also argues that education of children with disabilities is a right and this has to be accorded through appropriate education and welfare service provisions. However, Hunt and Goetz (1997) found that this was a morally driven commitment to children and a consensus of a set of values which they considered to be appropriate for inclusion. Hence, this view revealed that despite not being aware of what constituted special and inclusive education policies, the teachers' practices and actions supported providing education opportunities to all children in the mainstream schools.

## **5.8 Inclusive education teaching.**

This study has considered the inclusive education teaching that was actually happening as part of the inclusive education management. Under this major theme, School curriculum in use, Instructional strategies in use and Classroom management were identified. These sub-themes are explained in the following section.

### **5.8.1 School curriculum in use.**

The teachers' perspectives on the curriculum used in schools varied. The teachers from the special schools and the three teachers from the primary schools all favoured the use of the same curriculum as used in the mainstream schools. The secondary school teachers, on the other hand, said that there should be a separate curriculum for students with disabilities. Successful integration of students into the mainstream schools based on the use of the standard curriculum

used in mainstream schools was identified by some of the teachers. One of the teachers from the special schools mentioned the following:

“By using the same curriculum students with disabilities in the special schools were able to fit in well when they integrated into the mainstream schools”. (ST5)

Another teacher stated:

“Students at the special school that their teachers were in were kept till they reached class 8 level because the teachers saw that they were doing the same curriculum as students in the mainstream schools were doing; students also sat for the same external examinations that the students in the mainstream primary schools sat for, and eventually move on to an inclusive setting in the high school”. (ST7)

Another teacher from a primary school stated:

“It would be very difficult for a child from a special school to integrate successfully into a class in primary school if the subjects he or she was taking were different from the subjects he or she would take in the primary school”. (PST3)

The second teacher from a primary school made the following comment:

“It was best to have the same curriculum so that students were familiar with the subjects that they take when they integrate into mainstream schools”. (PST12)

The teachers from the secondary schools, however, did not support the use of a standard or same curriculum for all students. They said that students with disabilities should have a separate curriculum. One teacher held a view that:

“There should be a different curriculum for different categories of students. We have three categories of students, the weak, the average and the gifted, but all these students follow the same curriculum”. (SST2)

The second teacher from the secondary schools made the following comment:

“By having the same curriculum for all students, only the students who were able to keep up with the curriculum advanced and moved on to further studies, while those who lagged behind became school dropouts. Many of the students with disabilities would not be able to do some of the subjects at school because it did not suit their disability”. (SST9)

However, the literature shows that having a separate curriculum for students with disabilities in schools does not help with the inclusion of students. It only leads to more isolation and exclusion of students. According to Tilstone, Florian & Rose (1998), it is still common to find

teachers and even the whole school staff advocating for a curriculum for pupils with special needs which is separate from that which is regarded as an entitlement to all other students. They said that if this course of action was to be taken, its likely conclusion would be an even greater distancing of pupils in special schools from the model of mainstream provision and a general slowing down of the principle of inclusion, which recognises the right of all students to take their place as equals in society.

Spedding (2005) states that students with disabilities share common educational goals with their non-disabled peers. Therefore a common shared curriculum is called for, one which recognises the shared goals and characteristics of all students but within which individual needs are recognised and catered for, so that success is fostered for all. The literature also suggests that if students with disabilities are not provided with opportunities to address significant elements of the same curriculum as that provided to their mainstream peers then such action will restrict the likelihood of those students ever making a successful transition into the mainstream (Tilstone, Florian & Rose, 1998).

### **5.8.2 Instructional Strategies.**

From the interview data, it was seen that different types of instructional strategies were used by the teachers during the teaching and learning process. While there were some differences between teachers' various teaching strategies, all teachers appeared to focus on the academic content and the practical skills aspects of the education curriculum. For example, a teacher stated that:

"I am using different types of instructional strategies when teaching depending on what I am teaching, whether that be a content-based subject like science or a practical skills project". (PST10)

Most teachers stated that they were using many of the skills such as peer tutoring, where children of the same age were used to teach each other either in pairs or in groups.

Another teacher commented that:

"The college programmes that I learned helped me very much because now I am able to use these skills in my classroom, like cooperative teaching". (ST11)

On the other hand, another teacher's approach was a little different from what other teachers were doing:

"I have been teaching for more than 20 years and I seem to be using the same teaching strategies year after year. One of my favourite ones is group work where students are allowed to work in groups of more than three students on a given topic. It works well as students are able to express what they know and help each other". (PST3)

However, instructional practices also played a vital part in terms of meeting the learning needs of all learners who were included in the schools. It appeared that due to the education initiative, there was little difference in how the teachers used different instructional strategies. One of the reasons for this positive attitude towards the curriculum implementation was because they had learnt how to implement the curriculum whilst at the teacher training college where they also took some courses in special and inclusive education and the associated teaching pedagogy. These teachers seemed to use various instructional strategies such as peer tutoring, whole class teaching, and project work. This supports the findings of a number of studies which showed that teachers with fewer teaching years of experience were found to be more supportive towards inclusion (Berryman, 1989; Centre et al., 1987; Cough & Lindsay, 1991). In another study, teachers with fewer than six years of teaching experience were more supportive towards inclusion than those who had six to ten years of teaching experience (Forlin, 1995). One reason would be because the graduate teachers were still fresh, with all the skills they had learnt in college, and they were energetic and wanted to implement them in the mainstream classrooms. On the other hand, the experienced teachers were under pressure to implement the new curriculum. Two main reasons were identified for this situation in all four schools. Firstly, the content of the new curriculum was complex for the teachers to absorb and implement. The style of presentation and outline in the curriculum materials were complicated and it was not user friendly. Secondly, the teachers lacked the different instructional strategies that were relevant in order to implement the new education. However, the teachers demanded to search for appropriate instructional strategies to complement the new curriculum content. The basic reasoning is that the experienced teachers, or so-called 'old-timers', did not have the 'know how' to implement the new curriculum. Several studies conducted in the USA (Buell et al., 1999; Van-Ruesen, Shoho & Barker, 2000), in Australia (Center et al., 1987), and the UK (Avramidis et al., 2000) found that teacher education in inclusive education influenced positive

teacher attitudes, actions and practices towards inclusion, but in the case of the experienced teachers in the current study it was lacking.

### **5.8.3 Classroom management.**

The way the classrooms were organised played some part in the full inclusion of students with disabilities in the schools alongside their mainstream peers. The interview data revealed differing views about the practices in the schools. Most teachers said that they considered classroom organisation as an important aspect for fostering students' learning. As one teacher stated:

“I place those students who are slow learners in front of the classroom, so that I know what they are doing and help them accordingly”. (PST10)

However, most teachers that took part in the study reported overcrowded classrooms, far above the Ministry of Education's recommended number of between 20-25 students for each class. This had impacted on the ability of the teachers to adequately support students with disabilities, especially those with learning and behaviour problems, in the classroom. To illustrate this situation, the remarks of two teachers are useful:

“We do have students with disabilities such as learning and behaviour problems. But, I also must acknowledge that we also have overcrowded classrooms. I had 36 students. This was too many students but I had no choice as the school principal told us to enroll all the students”. (PST7)

“I had 26 students in my class to start with. To give individual instruction was a real problem as there were too many of them to teach. But many students have left school and I have only 19 students left. This is a good number and I am managing to find out how to help each child. I can see a big difference between the crowded class and this small class”. (SST1)

The wide range of students with different abilities in the same classroom demands improved and effective resources. Simple teaching resources that could normally be produced locally, such as maps, charts and other illustrative devices are not available in many educational institutions in developing countries (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). Scarcity of teaching materials

and facilities obstructs the implementation of inclusive education (Charema, 2007; Kristensen, Loican-Omagor, Onen, 2003; Stubbs, 2002).

Compared to developed countries, developing countries have larger sizes of classrooms which are why teachers feel the pressure of managing and treating every pupil equally (Ali, Mustapha & Jelas, 2006; Chhabra, Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010). In Libya at primary level, most of the schools have 35-45 students in the same classroom. This unmanageable capacity of the classrooms puts teachers under pressure, making teachers reluctant to pay extra attention to special educational needs children in mainstream classrooms.

Many teachers added another aspect to classroom placement, which is attendance. In other words, absenteeism and retention played a major part when making decisions to place students in the classroom, and the general organisation of the classroom environment. Some students who were falling behind or finding it difficult were often missing school.

“Some students who are finding it difficult in the classroom learning keep staying away from school and this makes it difficult for me to teach when they keep trailing behind other students”. (SST10)

However, generally it was suggested that as a temporary measure, through the classroom management and organisational practices, below average students were put at the front of the classroom. One reason for doing this was for the teachers to pay close and particular attention during teaching. Another reason was to avoid the children being distracted by things around them, including peers. The study appeared that these were some practices the teachers were doing to include children with disabilities. However, while this may be true to some degree, inclusive education is more than just classroom placement and seating (Foreman, 2005; Wood, 2006). It was seen in the specific changes to their teaching styles, the curriculum, the classroom sub-culture, and assistive tools.

## **5.9 Limitations of the study.**

As with any research project, this study has a certain number of limitations that should be mentioned for consideration by those using this study's findings or evaluating the results. Several limitations have affected the outcome of this study. Generally, a generic challenge to all interpretive researchers is the need to triangulate. However, in this study the researcher had to rely solely on semi-structured interviews; there was no observation or policy document analysis and this feature meant that the study incurred more limitations.

Only thirty- six teachers were interviewed in this research so this was a limitation in terms of how comprehensive the information was. It was difficult to make any generalisations based on the insights of the thirty-six teachers interviewed. There was also no statistical data available on the number of students with disabilities that were educated in mainstream schools.

Another major limitation of the study is that, being research for a thesis with very limited resources and with time limitations, it was not possible to cover the research beyond interviews undertaken, with more teachers at other schools in Libya or to undertake an analysis of government and institutional documents relating to inclusive education.

Another limitation is related to the translation of data. The interviews with the teachers were conducted in Arabic, and then translated into English. Despite the fact that the researcher paid considerable attention to the translation of the interviews, and asked one of his Libyan colleagues to check the translated data, the process is not without its shortcomings. The researcher believes that it is not possible to have perfect translation and that there will always be certain meanings that will be lost in translation. However, he is confident that the translated data has captured faithfully the meanings that the teachers expressed during the interviews, and that the data presented here do not misrepresent the teachers in any way.

In this study, data were collected using interviews. These were undertaken to obtain in-depth information to augment the current results. However, given the limited time allotted for data collection (alongside some financial difficulties), in addition to the extensive distances between schools in different areas in Libya, with the presence of danger after the revolution as a result of the proliferation of arms, these interviews were limited. Finally, a study of this nature may not capture the whole picture, which is why its findings should be viewed as exploratory and preliminary.

### **5.10 Summary of the Chapter.**

In this chapter the data analysis and findings of this research have been presented in line with the literature. For the purposes of clarity and coherence, the six major themes that emerged in the data analysis have been retained, together with other findings from the literature. The major themes include: teachers' understanding of inclusive education concepts, teachers' perspectives on inclusion of students, barriers to inclusive education, school cultural features, inclusive education policies and inclusive education teaching. The study has suggested that due to the teachers' limited understanding of what constitutes inclusive education, coupled with lack of adequate training, the teachers claimed that inclusive education was already in existence in the schools, but according to the literature this was not full inclusion.

The research analyses, understanding and different opinions of teachers about the implementation of inclusive education. It points out how inadequate and ineffective the teacher training was in accepting the students and their real life situations in a normal school. It collects data from several teachers representing different schools in order to get a clear cut picture of the current educational issues and the hindrance in implementing a revolutionary inclusive education. The research invokes government in Libya to revise its educational policies and infrastructure throughout the country in accommodating all children with disabilities in their severity and scope for betterment.

The thematic analysis of school culture resulted in developing four sub-themes: Acceptance of everyone in the school, Expectations for all students, Equal valuing of all students and collaboration and support provision. It is expected to bring out spontaneous development in all educational needs of children with disabilities irrespective of all superstitions.

Several factors were identified as the root causes of non-acceptance of students in schools and classrooms. These factors included type and severity of disability, lack of specialist teachers and limited commitment from the Ministry of Education. The next chapter will look at the implications of this research and provide recommendations for further research to improve inclusive education in Libya.

## **CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **6.0 Introduction.**

This chapter shares research findings, as well as making recommendations that may help to improve inclusive education? Disability, culture, teaching and classroom management in Libya. The first section presents a summary of results, while the second section talks about the limitations of the study. The third section shares contributions and implications of the study. The fourth section contains general recommendations. The fifth section includes recommendations for further research. The final section is a recap of the chapter. This chapter is provided as a summary for the entire study.

### **6.1 Political situation in Libya.**

The Arab Spring that swept Libya in 2011 has been a direct contributor to the marked increase in disabilities in Libya. At the same time, the provision of human services has been

compromised. It has brought with it economic uncertainty and more difficult living conditions with the influx of refugees throughout the region and subsequent draining of local resources.

Such difficulties are already having a negative impact on the quality of life and the learning opportunities available to disabled are diminished. Representatives of the Arab disability movement hoped that the Arab spring would provide a paradigm shift in dealing with disability and other social issues in the Arab world. According to Saif (2013), the Arab Spring which called for better living conditions has so far only negatively impacted on regional economies, especially those of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Syria and others. Taking population growth into account, economic growth will be negligible; thus, further contributing to the deterioration in standards of living (Saif, 2013).

Poverty and inequality in Libya are not widespread and has traditionally been a structural problem on a small scale. However, since the 2011 revolution poverty has risen. Though there are no official figures on poverty, it is not the case that significant parts of the population are fundamentally excluded from society due to poverty and inequality. The United Nations Development Programmes 2011 Human Development Index ranked Libya at position 64 out of 187 countries with a value of 0.758, hence placing it among the countries deemed to have a high level of educational development.

Destruction of schools, killing of teachers, changing of the school curriculum overnight in line with the western education system (Amusan, 2013) along with the difficulty in replacing teachers are some of the challenges facing Libya after the civil war. The psycho-social effects of war on children, the stability of the state and the mistrust among the population in general requires further examination. Children left by fighters from both sides faced a series of challenges such as hunger and lack of care. Furthermore, burglary by boys as a means of livelihood adds to the challenge

Another area of focus, of which many students of child soldiering have left untouched, is the question of the future development of the state. Recruitment and use of child soldiers indicate that the generation that was supposed to ensure development is now lost to armed conflict. The frustration-aggression dynamic may eventually lead to further terrorism (Sandole, 2010). The Internally displaced persons, including children and those that became refugees may find it difficult to re-integrate into society in the post-war re-building of the state. Many children who were not killed in the war are permanently disabled (Shah, 2003).

## **6.2 Research Question Revisited.**

This section is presented in line with the broad areas based on the major research questions initially posed for this study. Firstly, teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya. Secondly, identification of the school cultural features and practices that influence inclusive education in Libya.

## **6.3 Research Aim Addressed.**

### **6.3.1 Teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya.**

Most teachers who had been introduced to inclusive education concepts, either through their college training, further study opportunities, or in-service training, were able to define inclusive education concepts more appropriately than those who had no idea at all prior to the current study. Conversely, teachers who had little or no knowledge about inclusive education concepts were confused when defining the terms. This group of teachers defined the concepts in terms of training, education and seeing people with disabilities in their communities and schools. The study suggests that teacher education and professional development programmes focusing on inclusive education were neglected (see section 5.3). This research concluded that although all the thirty-six teachers supported inclusive education, most of them had reservations about the inclusion of students with severe disabilities, particularly those students who needed extra support and care in the classroom. The participants suggested that special schools should

always be available to accommodate students with severe disabilities. This research also concluded that teachers' perspectives and attitudes did have an impact on the inclusion or exclusion in schools of students with disabilities. Schools and teachers who recognised the abilities of students with disabilities continued to accept students with disabilities despite the limitations they had in terms of resources and funding. Other teachers appeared reluctant to accept students with disabilities and identified certain factors that needed to be addressed in order to accept and accommodate those students in their schools and classes. The reviewed literature also showed similar findings, which state attitudes, discrimination, lack of teacher training, lack of funding and resources as barriers to the inclusion of students with disabilities in schools (see section 5.4).

Most teachers generally felt that it was a right for all children to be educated in the mainstream classroom. The interview data further revealed that they considered that all students were to be included in the mainstream classroom. Some teachers saw acceptance into their school and classrooms based on personal sympathy and compassion. However, this research appeared to indicate that the schools were considered as social institutions where all children were accepted (see section 5.6.1). That meant children with disabilities were already part of the school and there was limited rejection, except for those children whose disabilities made inclusion difficult. According to the literature, what was happening in the schools was not full inclusion. Most teachers were attempting to be proactive towards promoting inclusive education in their schools (see section 5.6.1).

The teachers held a view that children with disabilities would have a different curriculum and they perceived the disability curriculum in terms of having and / or using braille and assistive communication aids like computers (see section 5.6.2). However, the teachers expected all students to meet certain testing criteria in order to be eligible. There appeared to be a lack of understanding of the different types of disabilities, their causes and the contexts that influenced disabled pupils' learning and achievements. It was revealed that the teachers held differing expectations for all students. As well as acknowledging the values associated with inclusion,

which was already a practice in their schools, most teachers perceived the education of children with disabilities in the form of a separate curriculum and other assistive tools.

Most teachers who took part in the interviews had a view that all children need to be educated as a basic right. They felt that despite the children's individual problems, shortcomings, and difficulties that may be associated with either disabilities or through other means, all children should be respected, valued and given equal chances of education (see section 5.6.3). However, the study revealed that equal valuing of all children was a practice that was already in existence in the schools. The teachers considered that all children had to be respected, valued and educated in the mainstream schools and classrooms. However, the study revealed two vital considerations in terms of valuing all children. Firstly, from the Islamic belief, there was the view that all children, whether with disabilities or not, had to be treated equally in their teaching and learning practices. Secondly, others viewed it from the terms of human rights and moral perspectives (see section 5.6.3).

Almost of the teachers who took part in the study were unaware of the existence of inclusive education policies, whether at the school level or generally in education in Libya. However, the study revealed that though the inclusive education policy was already in existence at the Ministry of Education, and despite the instructions to implement the policy, many of the teachers were not aware of its existence (see section 5.7.1). From inferences, one reason was because the policy did not trickle down to the school level through appropriate communication channels.

The study revealed that the development of inclusive education policies was not well understood by the teachers. The conception of what constitutes policy was also misconceived by the teachers. They thought of policy solely in terms of rules that govern the school or the classroom practices. The data appear to reflect a culture of blame whereby the teachers shifted the responsibility and blame on to the Ministry of Education. However, the study suggested that the development and implementation of the inclusive education policies were not well

understood by the teachers. However, whilst most teachers understood policies in terms of human rights and rights to education, others viewed it from the professional and moral perspectives (see section 5.7.3).

The teachers' perspectives on the curriculum used in schools varied. The teachers from the special schools and the three teachers from the primary schools all favoured the use of the same curriculum as used in the mainstream schools. The secondary school teachers, on the other hand, said that there should be a separate curriculum for students with disabilities. Successful integration of students into the mainstream schools, based on the use of the standard curriculum used in mainstream schools, was identified by some of the teachers. However, the literature shows that having a separate curriculum for students with disabilities in schools does not help with the inclusion of students. It only leads to more isolation and exclusion of students (see section 5.8.1).

The way the classrooms were organised played some part in the full inclusion of students with disabilities in the schools alongside their non-disabled peers. The interview data revealed differing views about the practices in the schools. Most teachers said that they considered classroom organisation as an important aspect for fostering students' learning. However, generally it was suggested that as a temporary measure through the classroom management and organisational practices, below-average students were put at the front of the classroom. One reason for doing this was for the teachers to pay close and particular attention during the teaching. Another reason was to avoid the children being distracted by things around them, including peers. The study indicated that these were some practices the teachers were implementing to include children with disabilities (see section 5.8.3).

#### **6.4 Contributions and implications of study.**

Despite the limitations outlined above, the researcher believes that this study contributes to the relevant literature in many ways. Methodologically, this study shows the value of qualitative research as it uses interviews to study how and why teachers implement inclusive education at

schools. In addition to contributions to educational research in general, this research has several implications.

- The findings of this research suggest that there is a need for those teachers who are reluctant to accept students with disabilities in their schools in Libya, to change their perspectives and attitudes towards students with disabilities. They should become aware of the international trends and practices with regards to inclusive education and the inclusion of all children with disabilities in schools.
- The Ministry of Education needs to provide the necessary funding for implementation, adaptations and modifications to existing school structures, appropriate equipment and resources, and specialist teachers to ensure that all children with disabilities have access to education in schools within their neighbourhood and communities.
- Teachers had reservations on the inclusion of students with disabilities, because schools were not appropriately structured and resourced to accommodate the educational needs and disabilities of the students. Inclusive education should be implemented in all schools because students have the right to be educated in the school of their choice or in the school within their community and do not have to travel far from their homes to attend special schools which are available only in the cities.
- There is also need for a review of curriculum content at teacher training institutions in Libya so that teachers are well prepared to teach students with disabilities in their schools and classrooms. All teachers should now be prepared to teach all students, and teacher training institutions must review their curriculum content and make inclusive education a compulsory unit of study.

#### **6.4.1 The need for change.**

To stop the marginalisation and exclusion of students with disabilities and to enhance learning and social opportunities for students with disabilities, there have been calls in the literature for significant changes in education based on a commitment to inclusion at all levels, from policy through to classroom practice (Ballard, 2004; Booth & Ainscow, 1998).

Many countries worldwide have adopted inclusive education in schools. Children with disabilities are now successfully included in mainstream schools. In countries like the United States of America and the UK, it is against the law to refuse enrolment of students in schools because of their disabilities.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2007) continues to appeal to all countries in the world to support the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. Countries that have signed the convention recognise the value of people with disabilities and have made positive changes with regard to the education of children with disabilities.

#### **6.4.2 The need for teacher training and specialist teachers.**

There is a need for a review of the current teacher training to ensure that inclusive education is a compulsory unit of study. This research found that teachers were not prepared for the reality of teaching students with disabilities in their classes (see section 5.5.2). Teacher programmes also need to be reviewed to develop specific programmes for training mainstream classroom teachers so that they can effectively respond to the needs of all students.

There is a need for more training of specialist teachers; particularly teachers for hearing impairment and visual impairment (see section 5.5.3). There is also a great need for speech therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. These specialists are important in providing support for students with disabilities. These specialist positions are lacking in Libya. The government should provide scholarships for training in these areas so that the Ministry of Education has its own set of specialists that could assist teachers and students in their respective schools.

#### **6.4.3 The need for extra government funding.**

The teachers in this research indicated that current government funding is not enough to meet the needs of students with disabilities in schools. The government therefore needs to provide extra funding for students with disabilities as they have special needs that require extra staffing, resources and equipment. Schools and teachers may change their attitudes if extra funding is allocated for students with disabilities in schools.

#### **6.4.4 Review of the curriculum in schools.**

The current curriculum in Libya needs to be reviewed as certain curriculum areas were found to be unsuitable for certain groups of students, particularly students with visual impairments. More practical subjects need to be provided, and students be given options to choose what is appropriate to their needs. The curriculum for students with special needs must be responsive to the needs of individual students and must facilitate maximum integration. The curriculum development unit in Libya needs to have a wider consultation with teachers, particularly teachers who have taught students with disabilities. Special education teachers need to be included in curriculum development as they are aware of the needs and abilities of students with disabilities.

#### **6.4.5 Improvement of school facilities.**

School buildings in Libya have been built without any thought for people or students with disabilities. Schools will need to adapt and modify their current school structures to suit the needs of all students with disabilities. All schools will need to have lifts and ramps to cater for students in wheelchairs and students with other physical disabilities. The government has a significant role to play in providing the necessary funding for modifications.

#### **6.4.6 The need for appropriate equipment and resources.**

The lack of appropriate equipment and resources was identified as an obstacle to the inclusion and participation of students with disabilities in schools. Schools will have to find ways and

means of accessing this equipment and resources to ensure full inclusion and participation of students with disabilities in their schools.

### **6.5 General Recommendations.**

While a wider and more concerted effort from all sectors of society is needed to promote inclusive education, three recommendations are suggested for action to improve the situation in schools towards fostering inclusive education. Firstly, adequate teachers' preparation should be considered through training. It should focus on inclusive education. This action is appropriate so that the teachers can understand the tenets and skills associated with inclusive education and disabilities. In so doing, the teachers can take ownership and be responsible for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools and classrooms. Secondly, the teachers should make use of some teachers who are already in the schools who have qualifications, background and experience of special education, inclusive education, and disability. A survey needs to be done to identify these teachers who are already part of the education system to provide in-service training for other teachers, and also to act as role models for these teachers towards fostering inclusive education. Other teachers can learn from their practices and follow suit. Thirdly; the work done by the Ministry of Education must be extended to all schools as part of staff job descriptions. This is because the government is lagging behind in terms of resources, financial and human resource supply and support towards achieving inclusive education.

### **6.6 Recommendations for Further Research.**

There is no doubt that there are a number of objective areas which are not covered by this study. Therefore, more research is needed to identify more precisely the appropriate measures for the objectives of inclusive education in Libya, in respect of the limitations of this study, and because the current study is the first of its kind in Libya at large, particularly when investigating inclusion through the inclusive education lens. While there are many areas of research that can be executed, three areas of concern were predominantly evident as a follow-up of the current study. Firstly, as this study only explores the teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards

inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya and school cultural features and practices that influenced inclusive education, further study needs to be done on the extent to which the school culture influences children's learning in inclusive classrooms in Libya. Secondly, the current study has identified a gap where the Ministry of Education had provided limited or no support for inclusive education. A study should be done to identify the extent to which the Ministry of Education perform their professional responsibilities in inclusive education. Thirdly, this study has found that teachers had limited understanding of what constitutes inclusive education. Therefore, future research should look at how professional development can make a positive impact on the level of understanding and knowledge of teachers in schools about inclusive education, and evaluate the impact of this training on inclusive education and teachers' practices. However, research should also be conducted on the impact of inclusive education for students with disabilities in Libya. A number of individuals with disabilities who were educated in mainstream schools in Libya now hold prominent positions in the country. Their experiences and life stories may be an inspiration not only for children with disabilities and their families, but to teachers and all those who perceive students with disabilities as "uneducable" people who should only be educated in special schools. This research is also intended to inform the Ministry of Education in Libya of the inclusive practices operating in schools that have already accommodated students with disabilities. It is hoped that the Ministry of Education may begin to bring in positive changes within the current education system and encourage inclusive practices in all schools and so benefit all students with disabilities. This research is also significant as a contribution to international literature on inclusive education. Additionally, it can create a greater awareness of inclusive education and its importance for students with disabilities in Libya. It is hoped that teachers' perspectives and attitudes will help all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, parents, and school management in the Libyan education system to improve their support for students with disabilities in schools.

## **6.7 To Recap.**

Significant changes are required in Libyan schools if all children with disabilities are to be included alongside their non-disabled peers. Teacher attitudes have to change.

Worldwide literature supports inclusive education, and many countries in the world have adopted inclusive education and practices in schools. This is yet to be seen in Libya as most students with disabilities are still segregated and educated in special schools. Students with disabilities have the right to be educated in their neighbourhood schools or in the school of their choice.

Several factors have been identified in the research as influential in the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion. These factors need to be seriously considered and appropriate measures be taken to ensure that these factors are addressed, so that students with disabilities are not adversely affected (see section 5.5).

The process of inclusive education requires considerable preparation and commitment. Not only does the process need to be decided and acted upon, but it also needs to be continually monitored and evaluated. This is still lacking in Libya and unless appropriate measures are taken by the Ministry of Education and school management, the inclusion of all students with disabilities will take longer to achieve. It is therefore important that teachers' concerns and the factors identified in this research be seriously considered for improvement of inclusive education in Libya.

The Ministry of Education in Libya has a significant role to play in ensuring that schools and teachers are prepared and ready to accommodate students with disabilities and their learning needs. With the current political climate in Libya, it may not be possible to make or achieve these changes immediately, but it must be acknowledged that students with disabilities have the right to an education alongside their non-disabled peers, and therefore necessary measures need to be taken to see that this is achieved.

With international pressure in terms of international trends and international decisions and practices, all stakeholders in Libyan education, that is, the Ministry of Education, school

management, teachers and parents need to work together to achieve international standards and productivity for the benefit of all students with disabilities in Libya. It is hoped that appropriate actions will be taken and teachers and schools in Libya be supported in whatever needs they have in terms of including all children with disabilities in their schools.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **APPENDIX (1)**

#### **SUPERVISOR'S LETTER FOR DATA COLLECTION**



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**Mohamed Ethabti**

Date: 24th May 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

The above named is currently a full-time PhD student at the University of Huddersfield Business School preparing a doctoral dissertation.

Mohamed Ethabti has made good progress in his research work since he started and is now expected to conduct essential field work from July to September 2012 which will require him to travel to stay in Libya during most of that period.

In addition to an extensive literature review, Mohamed's research project requires primary data collection and analysis, hence the importance of the field work in supporting the successful completion of his doctorate. The data collection will be based in Libya. The survey will require face-to-face interviews in a wide range of educational institutions in Libya.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Prof Glenn Hardaker

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Hardaker', written over a white background.

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Vice-Chancellor: Professor John R Tarrant BSc PhD

An exempt charity and a centre of excellence for vocational education and research



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **APPENDIX (2)**

### **SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING INTERVIEW: (ENGLISH VERSION)**

I am writing to you to invite you to participate in a research study. I am a graduate student in business school University of Huddersfield under the guidance of Professor Glenn Hardker. Presently I am writing my doctoral dissertation on the topic of Inclusive Education management: Disability, Culture and Teaching in Libya.

I would like to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed. You are an important contributor to my research study. I cannot complete this research without your help. Because you are a specialist in the field of education I would like to find out your views on some general questions.

If you would consent to participate in and assist with my study, I will be traveling to Libya this coming July to conduct the interviews I will be in Libya. From July to end of September. Could you please be so kind and send me an email my address is [U0868946@hud.ac.uk](mailto:U0868946@hud.ac.uk) or call me at 0913834681 letting me know if we can arrange a time for an interview? I sincerely hope that you will accept my invitation. I certainly appreciate your valuable time and kind consideration in helping me with this study.

**Respectfully yours.**

**Mohamed Hmid Ethabti**

**Department of Strategy and Marketing,**

**University of Huddersfield Business School,**

**Queensgate,**

**Huddersfield,**

**HD1 3DH**

**Mobile number: (0044) 077 66715944 // Email address [U0868946@hud.ac.uk](mailto:U0868946@hud.ac.uk).**

## APPENDIX (3)

### نموذج طلب إجراء مقابلة شبه منظمة

#### النسخة العربية

أكتب اليكم هذه الرسالة , وأتشرّف بتوجيه الدعوة إليكم للمشاركة في دراستي البحثية . أنا طالب دراسات عليا في كلية إدارة الاعمال بجامعة هدرزفيلد بالمملكة المتحدة.

حاليا أنا أكتب أطروحة الدكتوراه في موضوع إدارة التعليم الشامل: الإعاقة والثقافة والتعليم في ليبيا. وأود أن أسأل عما إذا كنت على استعداد لإجراء مقابلات معكم تتمحور حول هذا الموضوع . وبذلك سوف تكون مساهما هاما في هذا البحث . لا أستطيع إكمال هذا البحث دون مساعدتكم . لأنك متخصص في مجال التعليم وأود أن اعرف وجهات نظركم بشأن بعض المسائل الهامة المتعلقة بموضوع البحث . إذا كنت توافق على المشاركة والمساعدة في دراستي، سوف أسافر إلى ليبيا في شهر يوليو القادم لإجراء المقابلات. من يوليو حتى نهاية سبتمبر لهذا العام. إذا كنت توافق على المشاركة والمساعدة في دراستي يمكنك ان ترسل لي رسالة إلكترونية على بريد الالكتروني

U868946@hud.ac.uk

او الاتصال علي الرقم 0913834681

وآمل موافقتكم وقبول دعوتي والمواقفه على المشاركة في هذا البحث. وأنا أقدر كثيرا وقتكم الثمين و مساعدتكم لي في هذا البحث...تفضلوا بقبول فائق التقدير والاحترام.

محمد التابتي

طالب دراسات عليا

قسم إدارة الاستراتيجية والتسويق

جامعة هدرسفيلد كلية إدارة الأعمال

## **APPENDIX (4)**

### **INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH**

#### **(ENGLISH VERSION)**

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “Inclusive Education management: Disability, Culture and Teaching in Libya.” This project is being conducted by a student researcher Mr. Mohamed Hmid Ethabti as part of a doctoral dissertation at University of Huddersfield under the supervision of Professor Glenn Hardaker.

The aim of this research is to explore teachers’ perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education practice in supporting children with disabilities in Libya taking into account the findings of the General People’s Committee of Education report (GPCE, 2008). This study will use the semi-structured interview method. Estimate time to answer the questions of this interview will be approximately an hour.

Data for this study will be collected by conducting semi-structured interviews in Arabic. These will be recorded (with the interviewee’s permission) and transcribed. To provide reliable data, this research will use a Tape recorder with respondents.

The results will be handled in strictest confidence and all data recorded will be stored in secure place. Any individual interview results will not be released and all data will be analysed only by the researcher, and the raw data from related documents and interviews will remain private and confidential and in the hand of the researcher. Only the researcher will use the collective data results from the analysis.

**Mohamed Ethabti**

## APPENDIX (5)

### معلومات للمشاركين في البحث

#### النسخة العربية

ادعوكم انا محمد التابتي الباحث بجامعة هدرزفيلد للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة الاستكشافية كجزء من أطروحة الدكتوراه حول " إدارة التعليم الشامل: الإعاقة والثقافة والتعليم في ليبيا وهي تحت إشراف البرفيسور جلين هاردكر

الهدف من هذا البحث هو استكشاف تصورات المعلمين والمواقف تجاه ممارسة التعليم الجامع في دعم الأطفال المعوقين في ليبيا مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار نتائج اللجنة الشعبية العامة في تقرير التعليم لسنة 2008 وفي هذه الدراسة سوف يتم استخدام أسلوب المقابلة شبه المنظمة . تقدير الوقت للإجابة على الأسئلة من هذه المقابلة ستكون حوالي ساعة.

وسيتم جمع بيانات هذه الدراسة من خلال إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة باللغة العربية. وسوف يتم تسجيل هذه (بإذن الضيف) ونسخها. لتوفير بيانات موثوقة وصادقة، كما سيتم تسجيل هذه المقابلة باستخدام جهاز تسجيل (وبإذن من تجري معه المقابلة).

وسوف يتم التعامل مع النتائج المتحصل عليها من هذه المقابلة بكامل الموضوعية والثقة و سوف تبقى خاصة وسرية وفي يد الباحث. والمشراف الاكاديمي فقط كما سيتم تخزين جميع البيانات المسجلة في مكان آمن. وجميع البيانات سيتم تحليلها فقط من قبل الباحث.

محمد التابتي

**APPENDIX (6)**

**Demographic information sheet**

**Gender:**

Female

Male

**Age:**

19 – 30 years

31 – 40 years

41 – 50 years

51 – 60 years

**Years of teaching experience:**

0 – 5 years

6 – 10 years

11 – 15 years

16 – 20 years

21 – 25 years

Over 25 years

**Disabilities of children in your class (2012).**

Learning disabilities

Behavioural difficulties

Hyperactive disorder

Visual impairment

Hearing impairment

Speech impairment

Intellectual impairment

Traumatic brain injury

Other

Attention deficit

## APPENDIX (7)

### Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- 1- Can you tell me what you understand about inclusive education?
- 2- Do you have students with disabilities in your classroom?
- 3- Do you have training opportunities to help students with disabilities in your classroom?
- 4- Describe how you feel about students with disabilities in your classroom?
- 5- What are some of the challenges and barriers that impact on the successful inclusion of children with disabilities in general education classrooms?
- 6- How does the school environment allow students with disabilities to attend your classroom?
- 7- Tell about things you do in classroom to include everyone?
- 8- Tell me about inclusive education policies in Libya?
- 9- Tell me about inclusive education policies that support inclusive education in your school?
- 10- Can you tell me about the curriculum of the school and how it is implemented?
- 11- What teaching strategies do you apply in order to give support to students with disabilities in your classroom?
- 12- How are your school environment / classroom organised to include students with disabilities?
- 13- Would you like to add anything else?

## APPENDIX (8)

### Appendix: Sample of transcript of interview

Name of interviewer: The Researcher

Name of interviewee: ST3

Profession of interviewee: Teacher

Q1	Can you tell me what you understand about inclusive education?	Teachers' understanding of inclusive education concepts
A1	Inclusive education means bringing them together or putting them alongside those mainstream children in the same school where they can be learning together with the mainstream children. Those people with special needs can learn together with the mainstream children.	
Q2	Do you have students with disabilities in your classroom?	disability of student in class
A2	Yes I have, Hearing impairment	
Q3	Do you have training opportunities to help students with disabilities in your classroom?	Trained teachers
A3	Yes I have	
Q4	Describe how you feel about students with disabilities in your classroom?	Teachers' perspective on inclusion of students
A4	The idea of inclusion was very good because it broadened the minds of students with disabilities and it also gave the students an idea of what was happening out there in the world.	
Q5	What are some of the challenges and barriers that impact on the successful inclusion of children with disabilities in general education classrooms?	Barriers to inclusive education
A5	The school only accepts students who have speech impairment and hearing impairment, so students with other disabilities were referred to other special schools that suited their disabilities.	
Q6	How does the school environment allow students with disabilities to attend your classroom?	School cultural
A6	Every child has the right to learn, whether able or disabled. They have the right to learn so whenever they are brought to our school, we accept them, especially those disabled ones. We are teachers and do not say no. We have to take them in and teach them together with the mainstream children	
Q7	Tell about things you do in classroom to include everyone?	School Cultural
A7	I try to give equal opportunities to education to all children, whether they are disabled or not.	

Q8	Tell me about inclusive education policies in Libya?	inclusive education policies
A8	I don't know much about the education policies in the Ministry of Education but children have the right to education. As far as I know, I have never seen or heard of an inclusive education policies.	Existence of inclusive education policies
Q9	Tell me about inclusive education policies that support inclusive education in your school?	inclusive education policies
A9	Though the education department talks about policies we are not sure of their existence in this school.	understanding and implementing policies
Q10	Can you tell me about the curriculum of the school and how it is implemented?	inclusive education teaching
A10	By using the same curriculum students with disabilities in the special schools were able to fit in well when they integrated into the mainstream schools.	school curriculum in use
Q11	What teaching strategies do you apply in order to give support to students with disabilities in your classroom?	inclusive education teaching
A11	The college programmes that I learned helped me very much because now I am able to use these skills in my classroom, like cooperative teaching	instructional strategies
Q12	How are your school environment / classroom organised to include students with disabilities?	inclusive education teaching
A12	I place those students who are slow learners in front of the classroom, so that I know what they are doing and help them accordingly	classroom management
Q13	Would you like to add anything else?	
A13	No, Thanks	