



Research Article

## Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education in Batticaloa District Schools

K. Abilash

BT/TT/ Akkuranai Bharathy Vidyalayam, Sri Lanka; [abiabilash716@gmail.com](mailto:abiabilash716@gmail.com)



Copyright © 2024 by Authors, Published by COMPETITIVE: Journal of Education. This is an open access article under the CC BY License <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Received : May 21, 2024  
Accepted : July 06, 2024

Revised : June 16, 2024  
Available online : July 23, 2024

**How to Cite :** K. Abilash. (2024). Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education in Batticaloa District Schools. *COMPETITIVE: Journal of Education*, 3(3), 128-137. <https://doi.org/10.58355/competitive.v3i3.98>

**Abstract.** Inclusive education is considered a lofty goal that every country should strive to achieve. However, implementation of inclusive education and related policies remains difficult in developing countries like Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study is based on knowing the challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education especially in Batticaloa area and to improve the quality of teaching in the future. The study titled “Challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in Batticaloa regional Schools” was conducted in five educational zones in Batticaloa District including; Education was carried out on the basis of implementing schools. The purpose of this study is to examine the strengths, weaknesses and challenges in the implementation of inclusive education within government schools in Batticaloa district. As a qualitative study, 05 consultants for special education, 05 principals, 120 class teachers, 300 subject teachers, 25 students and 25 parents were selected from five zones and five government schools in Batticaloa district on the basis of purposive sampling and on the basis of random sampling. Questionnaire, interview and documents were used as data collection tools to get information from them. Also, data was collected through group discussion from subject teachers. All the selected schools were observed. The data obtained through these quantitative and qualitative data were absorbed into the process of classification, thematic analysis, interpretation and discussion through appropriate software methods. Reinforcement of appropriate practices, lack of parental support, peer teacher-student interaction, teacher skills, teaching methods, curriculum

adaptation, assessment and student achievement, social attitudes towards disabilities, heavy workload, government attitude, proper classroom technique, lack of safe infrastructure, resource allocation, Several challenges were identified related to inconsistency in implementing the Individualized Education Program (IEP), inadequate explanation of SNE to teachers. However, IE policies should be developed at the school level to facilitate IE practices. The study recommended improvement of the physical features of the school for every teacher to reach students at risk, strengthening of funds and resources in IE implementation in Batticaloa schools, development of fully trained teachers. Therefore, recommendations for the government to organize special training programs for teachers and head teachers on effective management of IE classrooms and delivery of inclusive education, as well as suggestions for future research on improving student achievement, improving students' soft and hard skills, and information communication technology (ICT), IE schools and physical resource management were presented by the researcher as central issues.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Special needs education, Individual education programs, Challenges, Implementation

## INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education (IE) was considered in 1994 at the Salamanca Conference of UNESCO in the UN assembly and became a significant international document in the field of special needs. Education plays an important role in the development of a country as every child has a constitutional right to education (Abbas, 2020). A teacher has to come true with his teaching skills only if parents want to foster learning among their children. Considering the diversity of children's natures and needs, establishing inclusive schools is the best means of social change, eliminating discrimination, creating a friendly inclusive society and the most powerful means for all to receive education (UNESCO, 1994). Also, there has been a massive change in the course of global education over the past three decades with the emergence of various organizations in the five practices (Hettiarachchi & Das, 2014). However, developing countries have a long way to go to effectively implement the Five System. In particular, South Asian countries, including Sri Lanka, are implementing UN to a certain extent (UNICEF, 2013). The United Nations introduced in Sri Lanka in the 1990s, the National Policy Statement on Persons with Disabilities (2003) has made significant progress in providing educational opportunities for children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. According to the action plan implemented in Sri Lanka during the period 2012-2016, IE is still in development stage. Furthermore, Sri Lanka has steadily moved towards the implementation of the IE principles, and this education is made possible in schools by providing students with suitable conditions and opportunities for education (National Institute of Education, 1991).

## Significance

Hettiarachchi and Das (2014) found that teaching assistants are needed in Sri Lanka to improve the IE practices as teachers are seen as less skilled than special education teachers (Hettiarachchi & Das, 2014). Abeywickrama and Ail (2014) suggest that all societies should move towards a paradigm shift by designing five culturally compatible models as current country practices for children with disabilities do not

meet universal recommendations. Masaderu, Kumara and Nakashima (2016) also found that teachers with disabilities suffer from inadequate educational opportunities, teaching methods, curriculum, workload, resource allocation, and lack of social participation. Inclusive education has become a philosophy as the concept of education for all has gained worldwide popularity (Sivakumar, 2007). The curriculum is a document that prepares a child's education for social development, work and social life as it is a fundamental element in the development of learning and development (Open University of Sri Lanka, 2007).

### **Literature Review**

It is necessary to identify students with behavioural, attitudinal and skill deficits and provide them with the necessary treatment. According to the classification of people with special needs in our country, they are roughly divided into thirteen categories. Teachers are important in working together with the social goal of family improvement (Salome, 2018). Teaching equipment, resources and time are not available to improve the academic performance of SNE students (Abbas, 2004). Most of the teachers consider IE students as lazy due to imbalance, improper government actions (Salome, 2018). Due to lack of parents interest in their children's learning, teachers are unable to teach effectively without appropriate teaching techniques in the classrooms. IE is every child's right; Not an offer. In recent times, much attention has been paid to early childhood ( Mag>Sinfield & Burns, 2017).

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **General Objective**

To know the positions of teachers in implementing inclusive education in schools and to investigate the challenges they face, and to suggest ways and suggestions for special improvement of the IE practices in Batticaloa district in the future.

#### **Special Objectives:**

1. To know the attitudes of teachers on the implementation of IE in Batticaloa District.
2. Inclusion (IE) identifying the educational background of the teachers who teach in the classroom.
3. To examine the barriers for teachers in implementing IE in Batticaloa District.
4. To provide directions for future development of IE in Batticaloa District.

#### **Research Questions**

1. What are the attitudes of teachers practicing IE in Batticaloa District?
2. What are the educational backgrounds of teachers who teach in inclusive (IE) classrooms?
3. What are the barriers for teachers in implementing IE in Batticaloa District ?
4. What are the directions for the future development of IE in Batticaloa District?

## Research Methodology

This is a survey study with a mixed research approach.

### Method of data collection

Questionnaire, interview, documents were used to collect data in this study. The questionnaire consisted of direct, open-ended questions to collect reliable data.

**Table-1:** District level based population range - Batticaloa

Names of Educational zones	Batticaloa zone	Batticaloa Central Zone	Batticaloa West Zone	Paddiruppu	Kalkudah	Total
Number of Schools	65	77	68	70	84	364
Number of Teachers	1763	1800	840	1414	1294	7111
Number of Students	25405	36476	12712	20422	23807	119336
Number of Students (SEN in IE)	54	53	34	37	72	250
iAB	10	11	5	9	9	44
iC	12	13	10	15	8	58
Type II	23	15	19	16	28	101
Type III	20	38	34	30	39	161

(Source: Provincial department of education, planning division - 2023)

According to the total number of schools in the Batticaloa region, Kalkudah has the highest number of SNE students, while Batticaloa West, Paddiruppu have the least number of schools. Most of the teachers are found in Batticaloa Central and fewer in Batticaloa West.

**Table-2:** Details of sample population

Names of Educational Zone	Schools (IE)	IE Class Teachers	Responded IE Class Teachers	IE Subject Teachers	Responded IE Subject Teachers
Batticaloa	41	51	26	244	61
Batticaloa Central	31	52	26	189	47
Batticaloa West	25	32	16	265	66
Paddiruppu	28	32	17	309	77
Kalkudah	49	73	34	193	49
Total	174	250	120	1200	300

(Source: Prepared by Researcher, 2024)

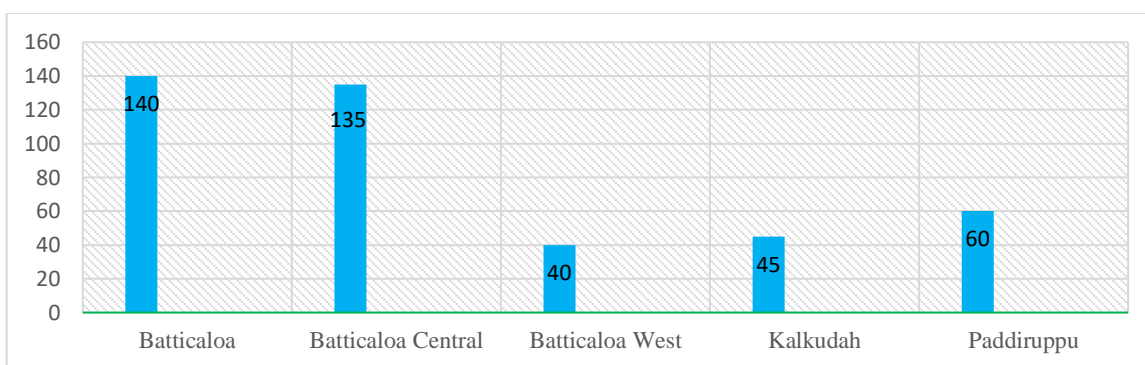
According to Batticaloa region; In schools with IE practices, ADS/ISAS (SE) and principals were elected 5 percent. Similarly, 120 class teachers from five schools

on the basis of 2:1, 300 subject teachers teaching in five schools on the basis of 4:1, 25 students and parents from each zone of five schools were selected for the study by method of simple random sampling.

**Data analysis**

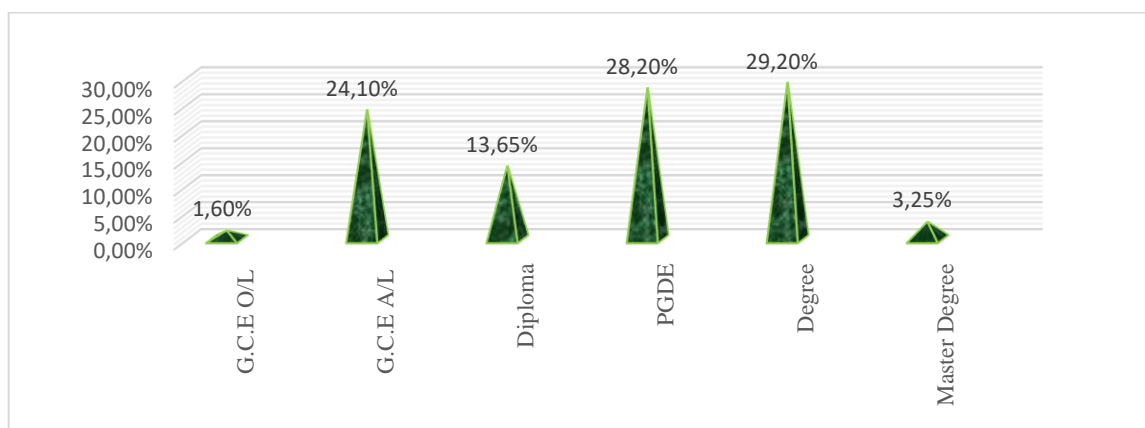
The data obtained through questionnaires, interviews and documents were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis based on the research questions and the obtained data were analysed using the Microsoft Excel-2017 method through grid diagrams, circular diagrams and three-dimensional maps, and interpretation and discussion were carried out.

**Figure-1: Teachers’ response in the IE schools**



According to the teachers' response in the IE schools, among the teachers in the IE schools of Batticaloa which area showed the highest response among teachers, followed by Batticaloa Central area and Paddiruppu area showed the least response.

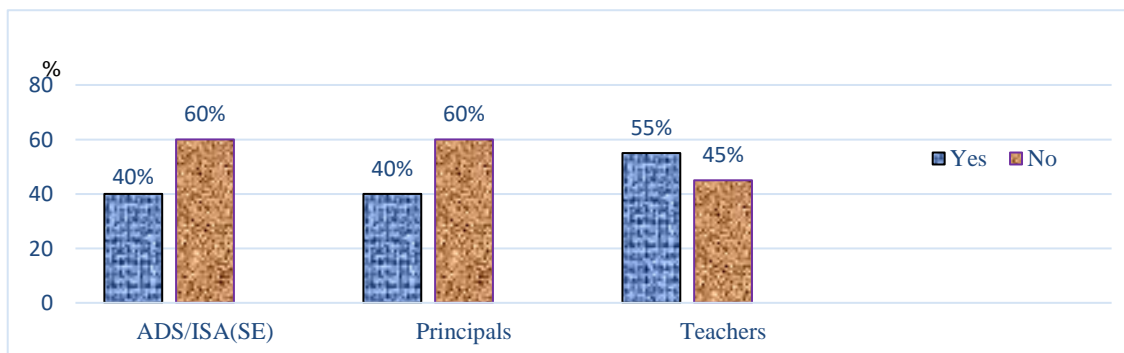
**Figure-2: Educational background of teachers in IE schools**



According to this figure, most of the IE teachers found in Batticaloa area are graduates (29.20%). However, only 3.25% teachers have master's degrees.

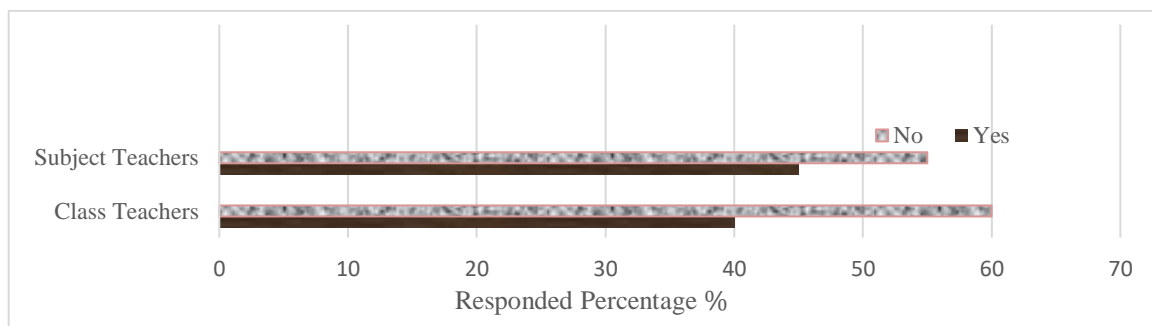
### Challenges of teachers in IE schools

Figure-3: Inadequate training for effective teaching in IE schools



According to the category “No”, teachers in five schools do not have adequate training for effective classroom teaching.

Figure-4 Teachers trained to teach in IE schools



According to this figure, among the subject teachers (55%) and class teachers (60%) who teach in IE schools in Batticaloa area, they were found to be untrained teachers

Table-3: Teachers' revised response regarding implementation of school-based programs in classrooms for IE and SNE students

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Marks	5	4	3	2	1
Respondent	70	110	90	80	70
	350	440	270	160	70

Total: 1290      Score:  $1290/350 = 3.68$

1.00 – 1.8	Strongly Disagree
1.81 – 2.6	Disagree

2.61 – 3.4	Neutral
3.41 – 4.2	Agree
4.21 – 5.0	Strongly Agree

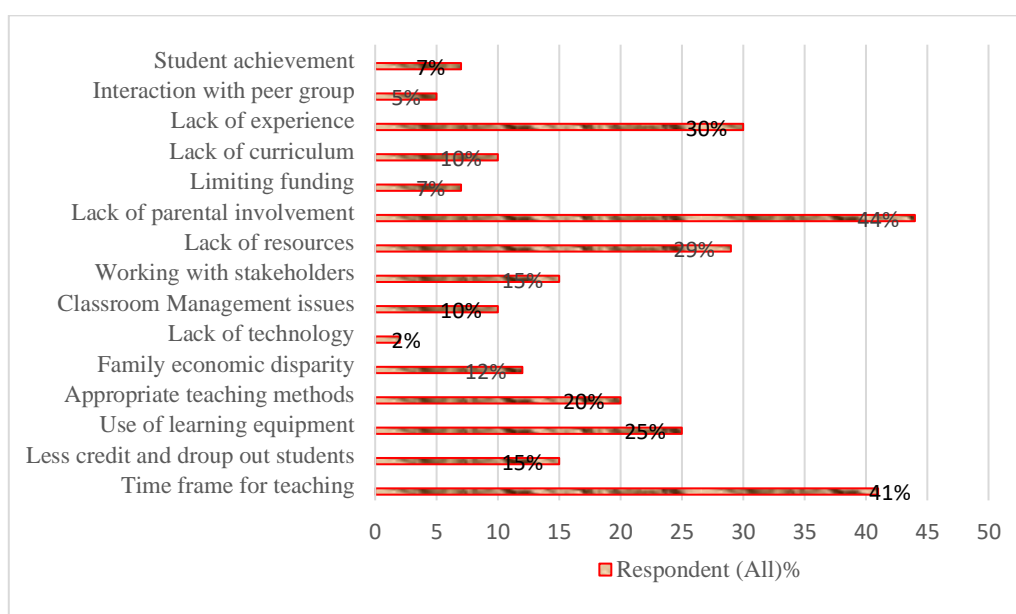
Accordingly, The method used as Likert’s scales of correlation coefficient (3.68) indicates 'accept' and positive. So the teachers agree on the practical plan and implementation of school-based programs in classrooms for IE and SNE students Also, some of the teachers' scores and correlation coefficients are given below.

**Chart-4: Response of Teachers in IE Schools (Mean Value)**

Response of teachers in IE schools	Mean value
How you feel about IE School ?	3.51
What are the supports for IE classrooms?	3.53
The relationship between the school's goal and IE practices.	3.49
What are the trending and technological supports for IE classrooms?	3.12
How do you feel about the IE school principal's support for the IE classroom?	3.34
Activities, Observations, Evaluations for Special Education of ISA/ AD in School.	3.82
Support from other teachers in IE practice.	3.34
Your level of awareness and support in teaching assessment of SNE students.	3.43
Organizational, institutional and stakeholder support for IE school activities.	3.46
According to whether remedial teaching, treatment, diagnosis test, and weekly assessment are included for IE students,	3.84

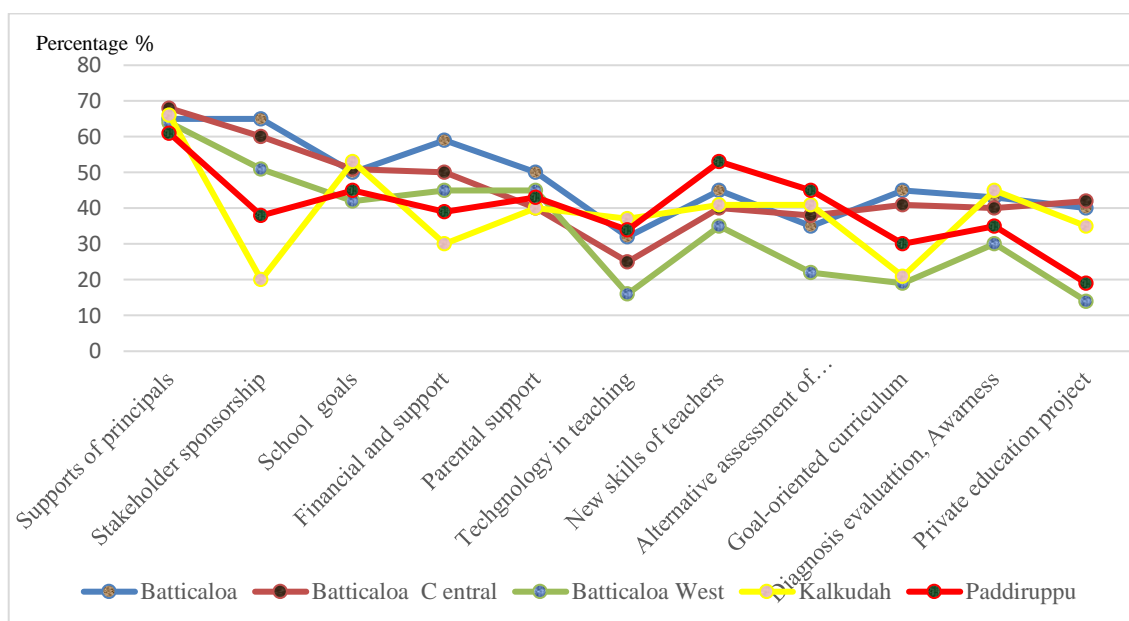
Although there are positive opinions from many sides, it was pointed out that the support and feedback available to the teachers is less.

**Figure-4: Challenges of teachers in IE schools**



According, challenges for teachers in IE teaching, teaching time (41%), lack of proper involvement of parents (44%), and lack of experience (30%) were pointed out by most of them. However, the curriculum for IE training, teachers' skills in the classroom, assessment and evaluation are better in Batticaloa district.

**Figure-5:** Teacher's response of teaching in IE schools



Overall, the teachers' attitude in Batticaloa Education Zone is better when compared to other education zones. Although there were regional variations in the IE practices, principals had consistent perceptions of support. Kalkudah zone has the highest teacher turnover on the 'School goals' indicator. But regarding the financial support of stakeholders, the lowest level of concern and the Batticaloa district teachers have the highest level of concern. However, all zone teachers were found to have a negative perception of parental support for the IE practices. Classroom teachers have more feelings than subject teachers. The conclusion is that special education support by ISA/ADS practices general is lacking in IEP practice.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Lack of parental support (44%), lack of experience (30%), , lack of time for teaching (41%), inadequate training (55%), increased dropout rates (15%) are the main challenges in IE schools in Batticaloa district.
2. IE practices are highly supported by most principals (65%) in Batticaloa district.
3. Inadequate support (37%), financial procedures and resources (45%) to implement IE school education in Batticaloa District.
4. There are regional variations in IE practices in Batticaloa district. There are huge differences in the practices, perceptions and mechanisms of classroom and subject teachers, principals, students and ADS/ISA who teach across the five zones.



5. Partner assistance, corporate sponsorship, use of technical equipment, and practical curriculum activities for the five schools in Batticaloa and Batticaloa Central zones are more than other zones.
6. Therefore, there is a need to formulate some mechanisms and implement some action plans to improve the five practices in Batticaloa district.

### **Recommendations**

1. All teachers involved in classroom teaching should be the best friend of the students and teach only after understanding the students' preferred activities, mood, family background and readiness to learn.
2. To bring about changes in teaching methods exclusively for students. Promote regional and gender equality in Batticaloa District.
3. Conducting programs under IE activities for teachers who need knowledge and skills related to IE practices in Batticaloa district. Also, steps should be taken to include an introductory course on IE in all teacher training programmes.
4. Provincial and zonal action plans should be standardized. Examples are parent awareness, field trips, street drama, dance, play, creativity, and social interaction.
5. The idea of 'noble service' should be ingrained in every teacher beyond the fact that teaching is a job. The education administration should take steps to reduce the variations in the IE practices in the Batticaloa district.
6. Facilitator sub-committees can be formed and implemented in Batticaloa district to organize adequate human and physical resources for IE development.
7. Every parent should be encouraged to see themselves as partners in the educational process. So there will be such cooperation between the school and the parents. Because teachers and parents are valuable resources in the school.

### **REFERENCES**

- Abeywickrama, S. P., Jayasinghe, I. K. & Sumanasena, S. P. (2013). Excluded in inclusive schools: Experiences of children with disabilities, their families and teachers in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Disability, CBR & Inclusive Development*, 24(1)
- Chinathamby, MA (2004). *Role and status of Teachers* - (01) Colombo: Toronto. Intracranial release.
- Hettiarachchi, S. & Das, A.(2014). Perceptions of “ inclusion” and perceived preparedness among school teachers in Srilanka. *Journal of Teaching and Teacher Education*, 43,143.153.doi:10.1016/j.
- Ministry of social welfare.(2003). *National policy on disability for Srilanka*; Sethsiripaya Battaramulla SriLanka. Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/disablitypolicy\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/disablitypolicy(1).pdf)
- Mag, A. G., Sinfield, S., & Burns, T.(2017). The benefits of inclusive education: new challenges for university teachers. In MATEC web of conferences (Vol. 121). EDP Sciences.

National Institute of Education, (1991). *Classroom management and Inclusive education*, Part-1. Maharagama: Department of Teacher Education, National Institute of Education.

Sri Lanka Open University,(2007). Introduction to special conditions and learning needs. Nawala Nugegoda: Faculty of Education, Secondary, Tertiary Education Department Post Graduate Programme.

Sivakumar, T. (2007). *Special Education Introduction and Applications*. Tirunelveli: Guruprinters.

UNICEF.(2013).*Examples of inclusive education of SriLanka*. Retrieved from: <http://www.unicef.org/rosa/inclusiveSlk.pdf>

Salomi,D. (n.d) Slowlearning- causes, problems&solutions, *International journal of management technology and engineering*, 8(2249-7455).