

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In special education, many studies have been done on the topic of curriculum evaluation based on various focuses, aims, and perspectives. Curriculum evaluation based on teachers' perception is one of the prevalent channels that is being used to gather views on curriculum effectiveness for the children with special needs in general and among children with cerebral palsy in particular. Review of related literature in this study is focused on three sections. The first section is about studies regarding teachers' perception of curriculum in special education. The second section will review four local studies directly and indirectly related to education of cerebral palsied children as well as curriculum effectiveness in general. The third section is an overview of special education and services in Malaysia.

2.2 Studies of Teachers' Perception of Curriculum in Special Education

Studies of teachers' perception of curriculum in special education basically focused on areas such as curriculum practices, availability of supports in terms of authority and teaching materials, barriers to curriculum implementation, teachers' training (its strengths and weaknesses) and others (Rahamin, 1997 ; Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995 ; Lynch, Lewis, & Murphy, 1992 ; Izen, & Brown, 1991 ; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991 ; Cegelka, Lewis, & Rodriguez, 1987 ; Halpern, & Benz, 1987 ; and Brozovich, & Kolting, 1984). Although most of the studies involved

different numbers of sample in special education, with various content instruments (mostly questionnaires and interviews) and children with special needs varied from one programme to another in general, teachers' views of curriculum effectiveness were found similar in certain areas of investigation as stated above.

2.2.1 Curriculum Practices

Teachers viewed that implementation of curriculum should be matched and modified to the special children's needs and aptitudes (Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995). Regardless of the severity and disabilities of children, they should be taught everything within their capabilities of learning so that they can become useful in contributing to their own living and in the society. In Ohio, for example, students with severe disabilities are exposed to academic curriculum that have been modified and adapted to accommodate their needs and their maximum abilities (Rahamin, 1997). Study revealed the teachers' thought that the curriculum-based adjusted to the children with severe disabilities are more relevant and appropriate compared to traditional curriculum. Children are better trained and are able to learn self-help skills, social skills, are more likely to be employed and have a higher quality of life (Rahamin, 1997).

In contrast, teachers found that the similar skills were not beneficial for students with profound and multiple disabilities, thus less emphasis was put on them (Izen, & Brown, 1991). Children with chronic illnesses need a coordinated partnership between special and regular educational curriculum (Lynch, Lewis, & Murphy, 1992). Study also found that there was preference to place students with disabilities in

pullout special education services rather than regular classroom as full time placement. Special students who were placed in the regular classroom could bring negative effect psychologically because of failure in interacting with ordinary friends and slow in catching up with lessons in the classroom (Sammel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). This could be due to the teachers' negative attitudes and low expectancies caused by the students' abilities and behaviour including those who are educable. Teachers who are practicing the content curriculum, may not actively pursue solutions to students' problems if they do not assume "ownership" of them (Gerber, & Semmel, 1984).

Despite the negative effect occurred in the regular educational settings, the special education philosophy still emphasized that each student has the right to educational opportunity either in regular classroom or special instructional classroom. Above all, the whole school should hold the responsibility to educate according to every child's needs.

Research indicated a few findings and views on the practical part of the curriculum for teachers in the classroom. First, it is the use of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in preparing the teaching plan to teach to children with special needs. The existence of IEP is actually based on the identification and importance to recognize the individual differences among children with special needs. The use of IEP is still in a controversy in terms of congruency of purposes and goals to instructional practices in the classroom (Levin, 1991 ; Smith, & Simpson, 1989 ; Falvey et al., 1989 ; Lynch, & Beare, 1990 ; Taylor, 1991 ; Algozzine, Morsink, &

Algozzine, 1988 ; Smith, 1990a). However, there are studies which are based on teachers' views that supported the positive effect brought in by the use of IEP in curriculum implementation (Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995). The effect of IEP for teachers and students with cerebral palsy will be investigated in this research.

The role of teachers played in the classroom is an important aspect in teaching the special needs children. Teachers are decision-makers in terms of modifying the content instruction into a more applicable and relevant one to meet the students' needs. In the process of what and how to teach, environment skills and aids (discuss under the sub-heading of availability supports) are a few areas that the teachers need to take into serious considerations. In order to let children enjoy learning and be able to make generalization, more practical methods are used. Studies have proved that the positive effectiveness of applying functional skills approach for teaching students with severe disabilities. In addition, there is evidence that the importance of functional teaching skills have been widely recognized in the literature (Rahamin, 1997). This is to say that the ecological curriculum practices have enhanced the special children's learning skills in areas of developing social skills, building up relationship or rapport with other familiar people and having appropriate behaviour with normal people which they cannot achieve if they are confined in the classroom or "in bed". Rahamin (1997) concluded that there are a few controversies in applying the skills that need to be resolved such as how to best define, select and analyse those skills and his study had tried to reflect them through teachers' perceptions.

Conversely, in another study (Izen, & Brown, 1991), instruction in the community living skills domain was not included and less emphasized, due to teachers' views that they are not beneficial to the students as well as insufficient administrative support. This phenomenon is considered a disappointing one and showed that the opportunity for those children with profound handicap to receive a proper education is vague. A similar finding was found in the other study as well (Brozovich, & Kolting, 1984).

Sands, Adams, & Stout (1995) questioned the effectiveness of integration of functional skills in regular setting because it in fact, took years to make adaptations and facilitate changes on a large-scale basis. Nonetheless, despite the barriers, the ability to redirect the aim and focus of classroom content to a more functional, holistic and life-skills focuses is crucial particularly during the transitions from school to community living in adulthood.

Besides curriculum practices in special educational setting, study had found some problems in implementing the curriculum among children with special needs in regular educational setting (Sammel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). They found that the existence of special students in normal classroom had not only created negative effects, but teachers themselves either "special education" teachers or "regular teachers" still hold a concept that children with special needs, not even the educable ones, should learn under a special pullout programme and should not join the regular classroom full time. Both groups of teachers do not seem to be optimistic about it. Furthermore, teachers' views on inadequacy and inappropriateness for the

regular classroom to address the instructional needs of such students were indicated. Thus, advocacy of special children to integrate in community may still remain partly theoretical.

There are different types and ways to implement curriculum in terms of teaching and learning in and outside the classroom as well as in both special and regular educational settings. The effectiveness is actually based on involvement of all parties and also depends on the children's own abilities and opportunities of learning. Findings could be supportive or non-supportive for particular methods but that do not mean the particular methods are or are not useful in other settings dealing with other types of special children including cerebral palsied children.

2.2.2 Availability of Supports

Availability in this context referred to humanity and physical support for the curriculum implementation. In general, findings have shown more humanity support rather than physical support for teachers to teach children with special needs. This is true in certain research findings (Rahamin, 1997 ; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991 ; Izen, & Brown, 1991 ; and Halpern , & Benz, 1987). Teachers had to spend their own money up to a certain degree to buy relevant and essential teaching materials. Study also indicated that there is often a discrepancy between the availability of educational offerings, as reported by teachers and administrators as well as the actual utilization of their offerings (Halpern, & Benz, 1987).

In contrast, other results show that there are teachers who did not use materials as teaching guidelines provided by the state or district educational agencies (Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995). The study reviewed that failure of teachers to refer to the guideline of general educational curriculum or specially designed “special education” curriculum might be directly related to the efficacy of special educational curriculum. Wagner (1989), based on research and school existing data, construed that lacking of an overarching framework to guide the curriculum experiences of students with disabilities may lead to poor adult outcomes.

The availability of supports in whatever form, is extra crucial for teachers to teach children with special needs. This is particularly apparent for charitable groups or voluntary welfare organizations that are actively involved in organizing centres to cater to the needs of special children in Malaysia. They not only need physical and humanity support, they also need financial support. If support comes from the government in advanced countries, then locally, the public is the main sources of support in terms of physical, humanity and financial elements. Often, the lack of financial and governmental support has become a stumbling block to maintain and expand facilities to meet the needs of special children.

2.2.3 Barriers in Curriculum Implementation

Barriers could vary according to environmental and humanity factors as well as different needs of special children while implementing the curriculum. Researchers had found a few barriers concerning special educational curriculum practices such as barriers in funding, barriers in integration into regular classroom, barriers in language

used for native special needs children and so forth (Rahamin, 1997 ; Lynch, Lewis, & Murphy, 1992 ; Semmel, 1991 ; Cegelka, Lewis, & Rodriguez, 1987 ; Halpern, & Benz, 1987).

Problems of funding is always a “headache” in implementing the curriculum. In order to offer good service delivery in special educational field, funding-a large amount of money is always a problem that needs to be solved and has yet to be resolved. Facilities such as expenditure of transportation, teaching aids, expenses to participate in community settings and all kinds of teaching strategies are costly and needs a lot of funding. This is especially true for cerebral palsied children who need extra physical aids such as wheel chairs, walkers, special keyboard for typing, computers which all rather costly. Children with chronic illness also need medical aids to ventilate them. Where should the funds come from? The public? The government? The corporate sectors or welfare voluntary groups?

Besides, there are barriers or problems of children with special needs integrated into regular classroom. The existing school’s physical setting is not built up with proper special facilities suitable for disabled children. This restricts their accessibility to the environmental varieties. As a result, they may just be confined to a corner without much sociable activities. On the other hand, regular teachers viewed special children particularly those with severe and profound disabilities, would need a longer time to understand instructional content, are easy to fail without conscious thought and are emotionally destructive. Thus, they often remain peripheral at the door side of regular classroom.

However, there are studies which show great success of integration of visual impaired children and the advantages of being integrated in to regular classroom in terms of learning facilities and to bridge the gap between normal setting and special educational setting.

Other barrier such as language used in documentation or in IEP could be influential when dealing with native special children who can only speak and understand their native language rather than English (Cegelka, Lewis, & Rodriguez, 1987). This could result in miscommunication between teachers and parents and children, "a silent victim" will be drowned in the battle of understanding and misunderstanding the requirements offered by teachers. Thus, they would probably left behind in learning and less achievement could be obtained.

Different settings for different types of special children require various resources to teach them and fulfill their needs. Barriers are everywhere. It all depends on how to overcome these barriers or to minimise the problems to a certain extent so as not to let the children and parents feel insecure within the environment.

2.2.4 Teachers' Training

Teachers' training is another important component in the curriculum evaluation. Research finding indicated that although teachers were trained to teach specific children with special needs, they felt essential to attend ongoing in-service training periodically to upgrade the knowledge and skills of teaching wherever necessary (Heller, Fredrick, Dykes, Best, & Cohen, 1999 ; Rahamin, 1997 ; Sands,

Adams, & Stout, 1995 ; Lynch, Lewis, & Murphy, 1992 ; Izen, & Brown, 1991 ; Cegelka, Lewis, & Rodriguez, 1987 ; Halpern, & Benz, 1987 ; Brozovich, & Kolting. 1984).

In a classroom, either in regular or special education, the common difficulty faced by teachers is managing the classroom and its maintenance. In other words, teachers tend to have the lessons in the classroom continued as usual without seeing the importance and needs of having changes. With this, upgrading and training programmes or courses take an important role in teaching and learning for the teachers. However, there are several reasons why teachers do not receive such training.

In fact, there is no equal opportunity for every teacher to receive training. Some teachers may have ongoing training, others do not. This opportunity becomes precious when training facilities and centres are not provided and at the same time restricted by the authority regarding the frequency and levels of training for teachers at the training centres (Rahamin, 1997).

Relevant training is another reason to ponder over. Sands, Adams, & Stout (1995) found out the source of training for special education teachers mostly came from on-the-job experiences. Learning by doing "in this matter" is imperative but does "learning by doing" connected to current knowledge basis and understanding of best practice? Does the school principal or the person in charge monitor teachers' on-the-job curricular experiences to make sure this is sufficient and appropriate

acquisition, fluency and mastery of teaching and learning skills? This informal training was further questioned when the source of curriculum training is based on general education courses (Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995). In another research (Brozovich, & Kolting, 1984), the similar problem had occurred among secondary special education teachers. Besides this, research found that teachers are lacking in compensatory and life skills training if compared to academic skill remediation (Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995). This differed from another research (Rahamin, 1997) that indicated those teachers who are implementing community-based curriculum received adequate training and had good technical supervision staff development as well as training opportunities which were made available by local authorities and educational training institutions.

Special education teachers who are teaching children with physical disabilities including cerebral palsy children and children with health disabilities need extra knowledge and skills to operate some physical and medical aids and knowledge and skills in health care management. Heller, Fredrick, Dykes, Best, & Cohen (1999) indicated that 40% of special education teachers certified to teach and instruct students with above needs were reported lacking knowledge and skills in about half of the competencies in physical and health disabilities. This is further proved by perceptions of special education directors and data gathered from university that they were not well trained during their teacher education programme. Nevertheless, results also showed that teachers who have a degree with a concentration in physical and health disabilities (including multiple disabilities) perceive themselves better trained

in educating students with these kind of disabilities than those with other backgrounds.

The result was similar to other researches (Lynch, Lewis, & Murphy, 1992 ; Izen, & Brown, 1991) which found that teachers and personnel were not well informed and trained in the areas of chronic illnesses and their educational implications. Teachers especially those regular classroom teachers were only exposed to short time (3 hours) lecture that focuses on physical disabilities and chronic illnesses which are not thorough enough. In addition, cataloging information about diseases and medical manifestation were found to be of little use and are easily forgotten. Therefore, teachers and personnel were not prepared adequately to face chronic conditions when all of a sudden, something happen to the child.

In other cases, problem of lacking language proficiency in documenting documents such as Individualized Education Plan (IEP) report, preparing assessment for children with limited English proficiency particularly those native children could be another burden for teachers (In Malaysia, the cultural background is even more challenging with multiple ethnic who speak their own mother tongue or dialects in learning and understanding the national language, that is Bahasa Melayu). This population would need teachers who have extra bilingual capabilities in managing curriculum, instructional practice and evaluation so that children achievement would not be restricted or limited. According to Cegelka, Lewis, & Rodriguez (1987), not only teachers, personnel in school such as administrators need to expose themselves

to knowledge of language acquisition and be flexible to have staff development from time to time.

Locally, teachers training for special education field seemed not very well developed. In 1994, Kamariah in her paper presentation stated the importance of human resource management in special education in terms of increasing expertise of special education teachers and to train qualified disabled people like those with visual impairment to become trained teachers would contribute towards educating the population with special needs. Furthermore, it is important to increase the number and quality of services and support services to the special needs children as well as adults. Similar view was found in another local study (Wong, 1993). In fact, for these recent years, services for children with special needs have been enhancing throughout the country, but how far the services provided including the curriculum is effective, still remains questionable. That is why this study is established to further investigate this doubt.

There were studies which suggested that special education teacher training is being driven by forces, for example certification policies that are largely beyond control of the profession and the needs of local school authorities (McLaughlin, Valdivieso, Spence, & Fuller, 1988). This incidence is similar to those regular teachers training as well. Teacher training system faced dilemma and conflict between teachers (consumer) and "supplier" of training programmes, local educational agencies and also higher educational institution. Moreover, conflict also occurred among the agencies and higher education in perceiving teacher competency and

whose responsibility to prepare training programmes that is relevant to the job market. Misunderstanding and miscommunication between them often result in teachers who had received the pre-service and in-service training but unable to teach well in school. This is because they faced problems of mismatch between training and job expectations (although it is undeniable that training is still considered useful in upgrading knowledge). This could further affect teachers in making decision in terms of content instruction, assessment and timeframe when teaching the children with special needs.

Researcher prolong this part of review to remind the local educational authorities to be beware of whose responsibility to provide training and availability of types of courses and the relevant of contents when preparing teacher training for special education teachers so that the above problems could be avoided.

2.2.5 Summary

Proper curriculum implementation and increase teachers' competencies in special education are two utmost important problem-solving areas.

Having an effective curriculum implementation, effective school policies and practical environment are critical. Both will refer to school leadership ; dedicated staff; academic engaged time ; expectation for achievement ; effective monitoring mechanisms ; positive school climate ; quality classroom management ; having direct instruction ; active parent / community involvement ; having dual or more interaction system in both teaching and learning ; small teacher student ratio ; having consistency

and flexibility in setting curriculum objectives and content instruction as well as allows multi-cultural education (Goodman 1985; Peterson, Albert Foxworth, Cox, & Tilley, 1985).

Having high competencies among teachers means to build up a strong human resources management. The above researches suggested that higher education and the school authority must work together to define roles and responsibility and reach some kind of consensus on programmes in teacher education. Also, the above studies indicated that educational agencies could be assigned certain responsibilities and roles which are not overlapped with other agencies respectively. Provide pertaining training courses and good financial supports are vital to fulfill the needs of different students status (part timer and full timer). Relationship between “supplier and supplier” and “supplier and consumer” can only become “lovely” when mission of special education remain the same : to provide a solid and thorough education to children with special needs and towards quality production of educational curriculum.

Those problems faced in teachers training could be overcome by setting up a consistent and periodically training system that must deliver in every school to ensure teachers have higher opportunity to receive relevant training in order to practice curriculum more effectively. The characteristics of a trained teacher may be referred to the CEC Common Core of Knowledge And Skills Essential For All Beginning Special Education Teachers (Swan, & Sirvis, 1992) which serves as a guideline to prepare relevant lectures and courses necessary for teachers education. This

professional standard guideline could be used in locally with some modifications to suit the local special education development.

2.3 Some Local Studies

There were at least three studies related directly and indirectly to curriculum evaluation done in local in the field of special education. Focuses and perspectives of those studies are similar in general but different in particular areas. On the whole, results and findings indicated a lacking of proper guideline, services or facilities in carrying out curriculum but embraced with positive attitude and awareness towards having improvement in educational curriculum.

One of the studies completed in the middle of 1980s was not actually focused on curriculum evaluation. The main objective of the study was to propose an educational curriculum mainly for mild and moderate intellectual disabled children that can reflect local requirement and demand. Furthermore, the proposed curriculum was hoped to allow the staff members in special schools to gain confidence and use proper educational curriculum that are recent and well structured to fulfill educational needs of local children with intellectual disabilities (Sebastian, 1986). In order to prove the crucial needs of having a well structured curriculum, the researcher had conducted a mail-survey throughout country to find out the development of curriculum in special schools with intellectual disabled children. The findings show that many special schools did not have a systematic curriculum guidelines (Sebastian, 1986).

The other study (Wong, 1993), a non-published research report was aimed to find out parents' opinion of the effectiveness of the Early Intervention Programme (EIP) and its impact on them and their children in three centres, Wisma Harapan (governed by The Selangor & Federal Territory Association for Mentally Retarded Children-SARC), Kiwanis Down's Syndrome Centre, Petaling Jaya (PJK) and Kiwanis Down's Syndrome Centre, Johor Bahru (JBK). Three centres catered needs to majority of children with intellectual disabilities. The study was carried out with distribution of open-ended questionnaires among parents in those three centres. Out of a total of 154 sample populations, 100 of them had responded to the questionnaires. The response rate was quite high, 65 %.

Findings indicated that parents perceived that the EIP (Early Intervention Programme) is very helpful (with 75 % rating 'a lot', 20 % 'some' and 3% 'a little') (Wong, 1993) to them and the children in terms of programme structure and policy. The evaluation also identified a few issues of concern to parents and limitations of the EIP viewed by parents. Parents are worried about their children's uncertain future as not all children are assured of placements in schools after EIPs. However, this according to researcher could be one of the reasons why parents' motivation and desirability are high in terms of mastering coping skills so that they can continue helping and guide their child. Parents involved in the programme were mostly from the cities. Vulnerable groups of families and families in rural areas have been neglected to receive help from the programme. Other groups of children with other disabilities were excluded too. Thus, the accessibility of the programme is still waiting to be broadened. This study also found that teachers who had participated in

the programme did not have sufficient training to meet the heavy demands and workload placed on them, although they had been working hard. This revealed that the staff development mainly teachers must go for further training to acquire the knowledge and skills in order to serve the parents and children in needs better.

An "Evaluation of Program Desa" was another similar study that was focused on Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in the district of Sabak Bernam, Selangor (Sebastian, & Kaur, 1996). The main focus of the study was to find out the effectiveness of the "Program Desa" particularly to look at the effectiveness of staff in terms of their responsibilities and delivery of services ; activities and its progress ; perceptions of clients and how far the families have received the services as well as perceptions of members of the community of "Program Desa". Also, to investigate whether or not the program has met its objectives or is in the process of meeting it.

The sample population involved a variety of members of the community such as the community workers, participant / clients ; relatives and families ; staff of CBR ; community members at random and referral agencies. The data was collected by using personnel interviews carried out by volunteers and staff who are unfamiliar with the district, questionnaire (translated in Malay Language Medium), observation, by looking at the existing documents in order to look at the background of "Program Desa".

Basically, the findings of the study were of satisfactory level except that some focuses such as on parents' involvement in CBR, measurement of young adults in

vocational training and employment, socialization skills among clients as well as mobilization of resources are in need to be improved further. This might reveal that CBR in Sabak Bernam, Selangor, up to a certain extent is considered an effective one in terms of congruency of objectives, community awareness, service delivery and clients' progress (Sebastian, & Kaur, 1996).

There is at least one study about children with cerebral palsy. It is not related to evaluation and did not involve a wholesome methodological measurement. It is more on views and suggestions on how to implement an early programme for cerebral palsied children. It is necessary to discuss the study as there are not many studies being done with cerebral palsied children in Special Education of Malaysia.

The focus of the study (Fauziah, 1986) is to ponder over some considerations on early intervention for pre-school cerebral palsied children in a special school (the Spastic Centre) in Malaysia. The aim is to emphasize the imperative of initial placement during early years of childhood and a few suggestions to overcome difficulties aroused by implementing a structured, much more systematic and comprehensive assessment before admitting a child with cerebral palsy into the school. The advantages and disadvantages of home-based intervention and clinical-based intervention were discussed through interview with two doctors. Parents' participation in taking care and educating their children are encouraged in either kind of intervention basement particularly during early age because the earlier the cerebral palsied child is stimulated, the better chances to receive education in later life.

The study consisted of suggestions and ideas to implement an effective home-based intervention. According to Fauziah (1986), it is better for staff and professionals to make adjustment in terms of time, cost, transportation and other related facilities to pay a home visit and see through what are the needs and problems faced by the particular child and family. This is helpful in preparing a more adaptive programme to cater needs and alleviate or minimise problems for the child rather than send the child to the centre straightaway.

The problems of shortage of staff could be solved by giving volunteers training on how to face and guide a cerebral palsied child ; how to help parents to undergo a period of “sadness and confusion”. Volunteers could be good helpers if they have obtained essential skills over a period of time.

Early intervention in special education has bridged the gap between house and school education not only among cerebral palsied children but for all children with special needs. Parents, as a ‘guide’ and ‘lighter’ of cerebral palsied children’s path to education and the open world, their partnership with professionals will enable effective intervention and therefore enable the development of the children’s uttermost potential and capabilities.

2.3.1 Conclusion

Based on the local studies above, findings indicated an emphasis of staff training or development in terms of continuous training, types of training, more time and experience acquisition and appropriate monitoring mechanisms to provide a

quality service to their 'clients'. Even in the last study, the author pinpointed the importance of holistic assessment in order to give a suitable placement for cerebral palsied child. Staff members are responsible for their work. Kamariah (1994) stressed the importance of human resource management in special education to upgrade the manpower as a foundation to expand the quality service and education for our special needs children. In addition, the emphasis on training is seen similar to those studies that had been reviewed above. Thus, this aspect is important for all parts to take great considerations when they set up an educational organization and prepare an education for children in whatever needs.

Also, parents' involvement is important although the degree of involvement for parents in studies is comparatively different. However, parents play a vital role in educating their children with disabilities especially during the early ages as no other person apart from the parents, have more understanding of their own children. In other words, their positions are irreplaceable.

Public awareness is seen better enhanced through CBR. The above studies indicated the importance of public awareness towards development of children with disabilities as a whole so that these children can integrate and be acceptable more freely in the public. The awareness can be initiated from the community via CBR.

Four local studies have had different focuses and perspectives. However, generally the purposes are similar, that is to find out the progress and effectiveness of a specific programme and try to improve the weaknesses.

2.4 Overview of Special Education and Services in Malaysia

2.4.1 History of Special Education in Malaysia

The history of special education in Malaysia begins with schools of visual impairment and schools for deaf children in the early 1920s and 1950s. The first school of blind is St. Nicholas Primary School set up by Anglican Church in Malacca and later moved to Pulau Pinang in 1926. The earliest education for children with hearing impaired started in a special educational classroom in 1954 at Jalan Northam, Pulau Pinang. A hearing impaired federal school is opened later in Tanjong Bunga, Pulau Pinang (for the education of cerebral palsied children referred to Chapter 1). This early educational services was provided by volunteers from local institutions, social ethnic and religious groups as well as parent-teacher associations (Kamariah, 1994 ; Md. Jamal, & Che Yahya, 1997).

The interest for the development of special education in Malaysia resulted from Recommendation 169, a report of cabinet committee regarding educational policy. Recommendation 169 stipulates :

“ Realising that the government should be responsible for the education of handicapped children, it is recommended that the government should completely assume this responsibility of providing education from the organizations that are managing it at present. Besides, the participation of voluntary organizations improving the education of handicapped children should continue to be encouraged.” (Kamariah, 1994, p. 13-14)

In 1960s, some blind students were fortunate enough to receive inclusive education in higher secondary school. In 1997, the number of inclusive classes have been increased to about 59 throughout Malaysia. Inclusive education has created

opportunity for blind students to further their studies in higher institutions like at university levels.

Besides this, under the pressure of Parents Associations, the Ministry of Education has broadened the educational services and interest to children with learning difficulties such as Down's syndrome, autism and mildly intellectual disabled. In 1988, two "pilot classes" were opened for these children at primary level. Unfortunately, there is no follow up and no proper evaluation to monitor the efficacy of the educational classes. There was merely a gross evaluation through survey. However, there was no proper empirical documentation of the data and results. Although children with learning difficulties are getting attention and classes open for them are increasing every year but, this is just a starting point towards providing and implementing a more comprehensive education services for children with learning difficulties.

Seeing that the special education in Malaysia has the potential to develop into a formal education, Ministry of Education has upgraded and promoted Special Education Unit to Department of Special Education in October, 1995. This is to provide better educational services for children with special needs and to concentrate and organize an education that is more systematic and without many bureaucracies but with higher flexibility!

2.4.2 Special Education Service in Malaysia

In Malaysia, we do have policies, educational acts and service delivery for children with special needs that are planned and implemented by the agencies of government with supplementary services from Voluntary Welfare Organizations (VWOs). In fact, without the VWOs function and helps, majority of children with special needs in Malaysia would have no placement of education even at the primary level but would be confined in the household without people noticing. No doubt, the VWOs have played and will continue to play an important role in providing the services of special education and raise the public awareness towards the rights and needs of children and adults with special needs. According to Malaysia Care (1992), there are 26 special schools run by voluntary agencies altogether, provided for about 3000 disabled children with moderate to severely disabled children and adults throughout Malaysia. By 1999, this number could have increased.

A few governmental ministries are responsible to deliver special education and services for disabled children such as Ministry of Education (Department of Special Education), Ministry of National Unity and Social Development (Department of Social Welfare Services), Ministry of Health and Ministry of Human Resources Management. Each of them has a role to play. The Department of Special Education under the Ministry of Education provides education for children with visually and hearing impaired and recently with learning disabilities.

The Department of Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development offer prevention and rehabilitation services for physically

disabled, the moderate, severe and profoundly intellectual disabled as well as spastic children. The department also offer social development services, planning and development, administrative support and financial assistance to supplement the income of disabled people who are employed, allowances to pay for orthopedic appliances, on the job training allowances for youth and grants to VWOs. Besides this, it is also responsible for setting up CBR in communities. In Malaysia, CBR is largely due to the efforts of the Department of Social Welfare as well as participation of several VWOs to complement the services. At present, there are 196 CBR centres throughout the country (Rajendran, & Sebestian, 1998). Activities of CBRs differ depending on the resources available and the commitment of the management committee.

The Ministry of Health is offering services for early detection, screening and prevention. Ministry of Human Resources Management is assigned responsibilities for providing job opportunities for the disabled people. One percent of the job opportunities is for them (Rajendran, & Sebestian, 1998). The National Advisory Council for special education offers a platform for forum on collaborative and cooperative role of governmental agencies and VWOs.

In Malaysian context, children with special needs are defined as those who have been identified to have learning problems based on their functional degrees of capabilities in the areas of cognitive ability, language, speech or oral abilities, mastery of reading skills, mastery of mathematical skills, social behaviour or developmental skills, degree of visual acuity, degree of residual hearing, self employable skills and

business and industrial skills. Apparently, this definition is more focused on visual and hearing impaired children although other essential skills which are relevant to other types of children are stated too.

Therefore, educational services from government authorities prepare education focus on visual or hearing impaired students and with additional learning disabled students. At present, there are 31 recorded special schools (primary and secondary) for visual impaired (six) and hearing impaired (25) throughout Malaysia (Md. Jamal, & Che Yahya, 1997). There are also special classes opened in regular schools for these children who are increasing in numbers. With the set up of inclusive education, more and more disabled students are able to integrate in regular school to share facilities and education with normal students. But all these services are merely restricted to those three types of children.

In a special class, a trained special education teacher will conduct the process of teaching and learning. The student teacher ratio is lower compared to regular classes, 5-10 : 1. Teaching aide is not provided except for those students with multiple disabilities, parents support group will provide the support services whenever necessary. Students learn based on regular curriculum. Some modification will be made if necessary. Students with visual and hearing impairment respectively will sit for the same type of assessment and examination as their counterpart in the regular classroom.

Initially, teacher could take up training courses in a special education teacher's college in Cheras, but the college is no longer a training centre for these teacher for various reasons. At present, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) is offering a special education degree course for formal teachers or people who are interested in teaching special needs children. The scope of the courses are limited to visual impaired, hearing impaired and rehabilitation. In the University of Malaya, there is a special education course offered at a master's level as well. The course is not for teacher training purposes. The content of the courses is regarding children with special needs such as learning disability, down's syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy and giftedness. There are other inter-departmental courses as well such as diagnostic and assessment, evaluation course and so on. The teacher training and staff development should be further established to increase the teaching services and knowledge in order to serve better in the special education field.

VWOs provide direct services and education to people with special needs just as equally important as the governmental authorities. Some organizations are even chaired by disabled people themselves, namely the blind, deaf and the orthopedically disabled. VWOs are national, state and community based. According to Rajendran, & Sebastian (1998), in Klang Valley itself, the centres with socio-economic activities has four types of operational approaches. There are the custodial care approach, enabling care approach, self-help approach and advocacy approach. Their objectives and functions include providing institutional care mainly to severely or multiply disabled ; providing independent and productive skill to individual disabled so as to integrate more freely in the community; providing service initiated and run by

disabled themselves to enable disabled members to be self-sufficient and independent and functioning as an advocacy body for persons with learning difficulties who are yet to be vocal enough to champion their rights.

Lots of services and activities are carried out particularly in areas of Klang Valley and in other parts of Malaysia. They provide day care services to look after children with special needs so as to enable parents to go to work. Education from early intervention programmes up to primary and lower secondary level are offered. Some of the centres provide vocational training for young adults to prepare them for open employment in the society. Sheltered Workshop in the Spastic Centre is one of them. Most of the centres through Parents Support Group encourage parents' involvement of whatever activities for their children to offer an opportunity of a closer relationship and obtain a deeper understanding of the children's needs. Through all these activities, they voice out the rights and facilities for disabled people through community actions and raise public awareness of the importance to pay more attention to the neglected group of children and adults with special needs.

As for Spastic Centres in Malaysia, there is a National Council that includes centres from Johor Bahru, Selangor and Pulau Pinang. One of the council's aims is to hold seminars every two years for all members (teachers, board members, parents) to meet together. Through a formal meeting during conference, they can share experience of what have been done or implemented in individual association. This is also an opportunity to generate inter-relationships among members in three associations. They share experience on management and treatment of cerebral palsied

children and activities in each of the associations. For example, in 1997, some of the activities and experience that shared during the conference were functional academic class, chiropractic, music room and multi media library, spastic shop, computers in education and so on. Other members shared their view and knowledge on how to manage saliva of cerebral palsied children, sterilization, physically deformity during the process of development.

This is a platform for members of interests to express and contribute their experience, knowledge about how to take care of children with cerebral palsy and what are the available activities for these children. Activities, management and treatment of these children could be varied according to individual differences, but how far is it effective? It seems there is less emphasis of report on this issue. This great occasion could play an important role for members to review, think and criticize in a constructive manner about the effectiveness of whatever has been done and new suggestions that are suitable for local conditions

Basically, financial resources for majority of VWOs are from public donations, associations or sponsors from companies. This is similar in Spastic Centres throughout Malaysia. Through networking, they are able to survive even though threatened by the economic constraints. Anyhow, the public and private sectors' support are of uttermost sources that must be sustained. Collaboration and cooperation with governmental authorities need to be further strengthened to avoid a situation of "doing own things behind a mask".

2.4.3 Conclusion

We have all the basic services and educational facilities either offered by the local authorities or VWOs. The emphasis is on how to further strengthen the relationship between the authorities and VWOs so as to work together towards a better special education and services for those in need. The other thing is, how far the services have achieved its effectiveness and to upgrade the quality of these services. It is not merely to provide the services but to further supervise the effectiveness and enhance the quality of the “product”. To do so, firstly, a constant communication between the two bodies must exist so as to have an understanding and knowledge of the development of special educational services and needs of these people. This can be achieved by having conference, talks, and exhibitions in public settings to enhance public awareness. Both bodies have to be more transparent in terms of supervision and evaluation of the effectiveness of the services provided. Secondly, to upgrade the quality of educational services in both bodies, members of the staff need to constantly review the services in order to delete and add in necessary contents and knowledge. Besides, a homepage of this local services need to set up through internet so that more ideas can be collected from various countries and be able to receive different comments on the services provided.

2.5 Overall Summary and Conclusion

In comparison, this review of literature does not relate to curriculum effectiveness among cerebral palsied children directly. It can only be reviewed on the whole among children with special needs. The first part of the review of literature consists of a few aspects of curriculum effectiveness from teachers’ perspectives such

as curriculum practices, availability in support, barriers to curriculum implementation and teachers training.

The second part is to review on local studies where evaluation of curriculum has been done directly and indirectly in the studies from various focuses and views. Although there is a lacking of facilities in carrying out the curriculum, but if compared to children who do not receive any services, the fortunate ones do receive some kind of educational services.

The third part is an overview of the history of special education in general and in particular in Malaysia, as well as the services provided by both governmental and VWOs bodies. The relationship of both bodies at present need to be further strengthened. They should work together through various channels to upgrade quality life of the children and adults with special needs to take challenges in a coming new millenium.

In short, the fundamental purpose is to check on the weaknesses of a curriculum that has been implemented for some time and to overcome them by trying new ideas, methods and contents that may have some advantages for the children's individual needs. Teachers, parents, administrative staffs, organization itself, authority support form a cooperative group that should together work out an effective programme or curriculum for children with special needs and cerebral palsied children in particular. Without one, the whole special education system will collapse. It is just like wearing clothes. After a while, one has to replace an old dress or shirt

with a new one in order to look neat, pretty or smart. There are so many people behind the scene who are involved in the process of making clothes but with teamwork and coordination, the end product is always very satisfying. It is an interdisciplinary work. Everyone has to play a role and together work towards a common goal.