SCHOOL CULTURAL FEATURES AND PRACTICES THAT INFLUENCE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA: A CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOLS IN SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE.

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

by

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WAIKATO
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2007**

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is a recent phenomenon in the education system in Papua New Guinea. It is about giving equal educational opportunities to all children, whether with disabilities or not in the regular 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 practices. The main aim of this study was to identify the school cultural features and practices that influenced or did not influence inclusive education, and the impact on inclusion. Teachers and school administrators appeared to play a vital role in enhancing inclusive practices through their practices.

The study was based on an interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm, the qualitative research approach and the case study methodology. Four schools were studied and categorised as rural and urban settings. The main purpose of categorisation was to identify some similarities and differences in terms of how inclusion was promoted in these schools. Teachers and school administrators were chosen as the main participants. The primary source of data collection was semi-structured interviews. Interview questions were developed for both teachers and school administrators respectively. A non-participant observation method was used as a support instrument to collect more data from selected research participants based on the preliminary interview data.

The results suggested the existence of four broad school cultural features and practices. These included staff understanding of special and inclusive education concepts, leadership and organisation, school cultural features/practices and implications for staff, and policies. Teachers and school administrators appeared to have limited knowledge and understanding about what constitutes special and inclusive education practices. However, the school leadership, collaboration and inspection practices minimally

influenced inclusive practices. At the same time other school cultural features such as the outcomes-based education curriculum and ecological assessment seemed to have the potential to influence the outcomes of the process of inclusion. The results suggest the value of Callan Services as a school support service agency to influence inclusive education in the Southern Highlands Province. It was noted that children with disabilities were already part of the education system. Though the teachers and school administrators claimed this to be inclusive education, according to the literature this was a manifestation of functional mainstreaming practices.

The teachers and school administrators and the Department of Education at the provincial and national levels appeared to take less responsibility in disseminating information pertaining to inclusive practices. The teachers and school administrators received limited support and information from the national and provincial Departments of Education. Therefore, the special education policies developed at the national level had not trickled down to the school level. This situation created a gap between inclusive education policy and practice. One of the major channels of communication and connection was through the inspectors and their inspection practices, but this appeared to have been under-utilised.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.0 Overview of the Chapter

This thesis opens with an aspiration poem on inclusion as prologue provided at the beginning of the piece (see page x). In this first chapter, the researcher's personal narrative that led to studying disabilities is provided. This is followed by the context of the study together with the background to the study, a brief background of Papua New Guinea (PNG), Papua New Guinea education system, and the primary education in PNG. Then the rationale for the study, research setting, research objective and questions that guided the study are presented. Next, the significance, and the scope and limitations of the study are explained. In so doing, a scene is set to show the basis and vitality of the study in schools in Southern Highlands Province (SHP) in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

1.1 A Personal Narrative

My personal experience with children with disabilities began with my own family where one of my sisters was born with a full grown single tooth. My parents told me that this had happened from our cultural belief that my mother ate some food from our enemy tribe who had killed my grandfather, my mother's father and this was assumed to be through sorcery. Also, it was culturally unusual for a new born baby to have a long and full-grown single tooth. However, the single tooth eventually fell off as she grew up around the age of 12. My sister was three years older than myself and we grew up together. Whenever she made me or the other members of the family angry, one of the ways to avenge was to tease, scold and label her as having a longer tooth which was unusual and in so doing we would deeply demean her worth. This would discourage her and she would elect to say very little.

However, despite the negativity that surrounded her life, my sister still felt secure having been around her immediate family members, relatives, the clan and the wider tribal group. She felt part of the blood relations as there was family support, encouragement and access to other services being a family member. There was love, compassion and bonding with her and the entire family. We would not let her suffer silently alone as it is our Melanesian culture that protection and care for those people with disabilities and the marginalised had to come from us as family members. We valued her in many ways and that was evident in the support we provided in terms of material goods such as food and shelter, and personal virtues which were expressed in the form of unconditional love, compassion, sympathy, and empathy. Whilst the material things played a part, the personal virtues were the essence and/or fundamental nature that included her as part of the family. If it was not for the personal virtues that came from the 'blood connections and affiliations', my sister would not have been part of the family. Also, if we had regarded her as an object of pity, we would have thrown her out of the house and not bother giving her food, shelter and protection. It was the 'blood and relations bond' that connected my entire family, including my sister, and I saw her grow up into a young woman despite the odds.

Regrettably, my sister left school in grade two due to continuous scolding, harassment, and teasing by those people around her. She left school around the age of eight and now she is a proud mother of three well behaved children. I grew up with this experience in my own family and later went to school. From my primary school to high school and college training, I also came across children with all forms of disabilities. They would walk long distances every day to reach the nearby school in rain, mud, bush tracking in the hope of getting formal education. Most would leave school due to the distance from home to school. Others would leave school due to the negative attitudes of their school mates and the teachers. Some more children would leave due to poverty when their parents could not afford the schools fees to meet the PNG government's 'user-pay-policy'. Through my humble experiences, I learned that teachers in the schools that I attended in PNG made little attempt to meet the learning needs of the children with disabilities. Rather, they were often perceived to be difficult to deal with and as a

consequence many children left school because their individual learning needs were not met in the regular schools and classrooms.

Through a stringent exam-driven selection process after the end of my high school I was fortunate to be selected to attend Dauli Teachers' College in PNG from 1993-1995. In fact the grades that I attained in the grade 10 exams qualified me to attend the college. The alternative was to have been in the village being labelled as a failure. In my first year the principal of the college told us that he was looking around for a lecturer to teach special education courses at the college. He looked for lecturers with special education qualifications but at that time there was no one qualified in special education throughout PNG. The principal further sought to recruit some overseas volunteers, especially from Australia and New Zealand through the Asia Pacific Christian Mission (APCM) Volunteer Service. However, despite the need there was no one to teach special education courses at the college during my time. When I was given an opportunity to do my undergraduate and postgraduate studies at Massey University in New Zealand in 1998, I opted to do Special Education. On return to PNG I was appointed as a special education lecturer at the same teachers' college that I attended. My role there was to teach special education courses to teacher trainees and that was my best contribution towards the education of children with disabilities in regular schools in PNG.

1.2 Context of the Study
1.2.1 Background to the Study

In PNG, people's perceptions about disabilities are often associated with low-class, low social status and the incumbents are considered to be socially unfit with a deficiency in societal norms and practices (Ahai, 1993). Due to PNG having more than 800 languages and a diverse cultural complexity, different people who come from different provinces (20 altogether) in PNG interpret disabilities from different perspectives and understanding. However, one of those common interpretations associated with disabilities is sorcery (Ahai, 1993). In other words, people's perceptions towards disabilities are assumed to be caused by sorcery due to enemy frictions and differences

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that can sometimes culminate in deaths through physical violence and destruction. Teachers and school administrators in primary schools in PNG prove no exception and this will be demonstrated in this thesis.

Education is PNG is a relatively recent phenomenon. Whilst primary schools have been in PNG for the past 50 years, secondary schools were developed later (Guy & Avei, 2001). Primary schools in PNG were therefore built with the intention of serving the communities (Department of Education, 2002a). Due to the rugged terrain and remoteness of the country, the government thought that primary schools would be available to all children in their own communities in the hope of achieving the Universal Primary Education (UPE) as advocated by the United Nations (UN) (Webster, 2000). However, from the researcher's teaching experiences and observations in PNG schools, children with disabilities are often given less consideration or are ignored during the initial education planning, organisation and policy development and/or programme implementation. This situation, however, is contrary to the Papua New Guinea National Constitution which stipulates five national goals which according to Matane (1986) include:

> Integral human development,
> Equality and participation,
> National sovereignty and self-reliance,
> Natural resources and environment, [and]
> Papua New Guinea ways. (p.7)

According to Matane (1986), the goal of integral human development is important for the education of all children in PNG and it acts as the cornerstone to achieve the other goals. The PNG National constitution also advocates the education of children with disabilities where the goal of integral human development is defined in the following words:

> We declare our first goal to be for every person to be dynamically involved in the process of freeing himself or herself from every form of domination or oppression so that each man and woman will have the opportunity to develop as a whole person in relationship with others. (Matane, 1986, p.7)

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This was later supported by the PNG Education Philosophy on which the previous and current education system is based (Matane, 1986). The Philosophy of Education also advocates integral human development and education for all. However, Matane (1986) maintains that socialisation must be provided in the education process with maximum participation by all members of society, including children with disabilities. In so doing, this can lead to such children's involvement and participation in the learning process. According to Matane, such a deliberate action can lead to the achievement of vital national goals such as liberation from all forms of domination and oppression. The ultimate outcome of such actions can achieve a society where education is based on the principle of equality. The PNG education system is based on these goals and principles, which is vital for the education and wellbeing of all as human beings. The link of educational reform and in particular the reform of the curriculum has been considered and thus laid down in the report '*A Philosophy of Education for Papua New Guinea*' (Department of Education, 2002a). Though the education of children with disabilities was not specifically mentioned in this vital document, it is stated that all children have to be educated within their own community schools in line with the government's intentions (Ahai, 1993).

However, with the influences of their cultural perspectives, teachers and school administrators often thought that children with disabilities should be institutionalised rather than being educated in the regular schools. Hence, in the 1970s to the early 1990s, school-age children with disabilities were often institutionalised in schools such as the Mt. Sion School for the Blind in Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, Chesire Homes and Laloki Rehabilitation Center for Mental Disabilities in Port Moresby and in the major hospital wards among other facilities (Ahai, 1993). The direction towards the education of children with disabilities got recognition in the national education system with the introduction of the '*National Special Education Plan and Policy and Guidelines for Special Education*' in 1993. This was a major policy shift towards the education of children with disabilities in the regular schools in PNG. To date, all the nine Primary Teachers' Colleges (Rombo, 2003) have a course on disabilities where inclusive education is part of the college curriculum offerings (Department of Education, 2002a).

With the special education policy already in existence in PNG, the Department of Education expects all children to be educated in regular schools with consideration being given for some children to continue their education in other institutions, particularly children with severe developmental disabilities (Department of Education, 2002a). However, it is not a mandatory requirement for all children to be educated in regular classrooms in PNG (Ahai, 1993). At the same time, teachers and school administrators play a major part by accepting children with disabilities and educating them along with their normal peers in the regular education system. Hence, in order to achieve inclusive education in PNG, the school cultural features and practices appear to play a major part. Together with Stoll (1999), school culture therefore refers to how things are done at the school level and all children need to be given equal chances to education, particularly those learners with disabilities.

1.2.2 A Brief Background of Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is an island nation in the South Pacific, with a somewhat troubled past due to ethnic, economic, and political contention (Boeha & Robins, 2000). The eastern half of the island of New Guinea, the second largest in the world, was divided between Germany (north) and the UK (south) in 1885. The latter area was transferred to Australia in 1902, which occupied the northern portion during World War I and continued to administer the combined areas until independence in 1975. A nine-year secessionist revolt on the island of Bougainville, which erupted as a result of claims for environmental damage by the giant CRA Bougainville copper mine ended in 1997 after claiming some 20,000 lives (Boeha & Robins, 2000). PNG is richly endowed with natural resources, but exploration has been hampered by rugged terrain and the high cost of developing an infrastructure. Agriculture provides a subsistence livelihood for 85% of the population. Mineral deposits, including oil, gas, copper, nickel, and gold account for nearly two-thirds of export earnings. The economy has improved over the past three years because of high commodity prices and a stabilised political party system following a prolonged period of instability (Post Courier, 2005). PNG became an independent nation from Australia on the 16th of September, 1975. At the same time the PNG education

system is essentially imported from colonial times, particularly from the British and later the Australian education system as the country's colonial masters (Waiko, 1997). Since then PNG has gone through successive stages of educational change whereby the education reform that began as a direct result of '*The Education Sector Study*' in 1991, is one major educational initiative of the PNG government (Department of Education, 2002a).

1.2.3 Papua New Guinea Education System

Papua New Guinea has an education system which emanates from the British and Australian education systems as the country's colonial masters (Pau, 1993; Waiko, 1997). According to recorded history, the education system in PNG went through several successive stages of change (Watson, 1982; Weeks & Guthrie, 1984). These stages include the: conversion stage (1880s-1940s), dualism stage (1940s-1960s), expansion stage (1960s-1970s), nationalism stage (1970s), decentralisation stage (late 1970s and early 1980s). The late 1980s and early 1990s and beyond can be called the education reformation stage (Department of Education, 2002a; Pau, 1993; Rombo, 2003). According to Pau (1993), the conversion stage was the period when the indigenous Papua New Guineans were converted to Christianity from their traditional lifestyles through the work of the early missionaries. The dualism stage was when the colonial government established and operated schools alongside the missions, but the curriculum was based on the mission philosophy. The expansion stage was the period when many schools were built with the main purpose of manpower preparation for the would-be independent nation before the country got independence in 1975. This was followed by the nationalism stage when the church and government established partnership to run the schools that they had built. The idea of localisation also began to take effect during this period (Watson, 1982). The decentralisation period was the time when certain functions of the central National Department of Education (NDOE) such as the operation functions of primary schools, high schools, vocational and technical schools were transferred to each of the 20 provinces in PNG (Pau, 1993; Weeks & Guthrie, 1984). The latest, the education reformation stage was initiated with the main purpose of establishing relevant

education for all Papua New Guineans based on the *Philosophy of Education for Papua New Guinea* (Department of Education, 2002a; Matane, 1986) (see PNG Education Reform Structure: Appendix M). Along with the structural reform in the education system, curriculum changes also occurred and one of the most notable being the 'Curriculum Reform Implementation Project (CRIP) (Department of Education, 2002a). The main purpose of this curriculum reform was to develop and implement relevant curriculum that would meet the needs of all Papua New Guineans from 'prep' (early childhood) to grade eight. This was an ongoing project even during the time of the current study.

1.2.4 Primary Education in Papua New Guinea

Primary education in PNG is considered as the basic form of education for children to acquire basic skills for communication or computation which would help either to move to the next level of education, which is high school or to settle in the community (Webster, 2004). According to the Department of Education (2002a), prior to the introduction of the current education reform in 1991 primary education in PNG was considered as a single period of education from grade one to six. This is where a child at the age of 7 was allowed to enter grade one until he/she completed grade six (see PNG Education Reform Structure: Appendix M). A child was allowed to proceed to high school on passing the stringent grade six exams in basic Mathematics, English, Science, and General Subjects which included health, environment, and community living among other topics. Children who did not pass the exams returned to the village or community with the general perception or label of being a failure (Webster, 2004). According to the Department of Education (2002a), the language of instruction under this structure was English with no use of the vernacular, used occasionally to explain and demonstrate complex English concepts.

On the other hand, in line with the education reform, primary education has been divided into two sections called lower primary education and upper primary education (Department of Education, 2002a) (see PNG Education Reform Structure: Appendix M).

The former section is further divided into two sections called Elementary Education (ages 6-8), and lower primary education (ages 9-11). The upper primary section consists of grade 6 to 8 (ages 12-14). That means a child in the current education reform structure has to complete nine years of basic primary education; three years in elementary school and another six years in a primary school. As the National Education Plan for PNG states: "After nine years of basic education, they will be equipped with the basic skills to help them adjust back to their communities or continue to further education" (Department of Education, 2002b, p.3). A major shift in the education system is the use of local vernacular as the language of instruction from elementary prep to elementary grade three. Paraide (2002) stated that English could be introduced while in term three or four in the elementary grade two. Nevertheless, the use of local vernacular is still encouraged as the child moves up the grade levels, even into the tertiary sector. Empirical evidence supports the basic premise that children acquire new language better when they are first introduced to their mother tongue and transfer their reading and writing skills to other areas (Department of Education, 2002a; Paraide, 2002).

However, whilst the education reform, especially at the primary school sector has reached momentum and stabilized to some degree to progression, certain set backs have been identified (Department of Education, 2002a; Maha & Flaherty, 2003). Among others, retention has been identified to be a major problem in primary schools in PNG (Department of Education, 2002a; Post Courier, 2005; Webster, 2000, 2004a, 2004b). According to Department of Education (2002a), 50% of children of children in PNG leave school before they complete their primary education cycle. This situation is aptly expressed in the words of Webster (2004b) where he suggests: "Teachers and education authorities see this as a solution to large class size and, as usual, blame the child for leaving schools" (p. 11). From the teaching experiences of the researcher, most children who leave school are those with disabilities and who face other problems in terms of school fees, distance from the school, poverty and living conditions that affect their livelihood and continuation of education as expressed in the personal vignette in the opening part of this chapter.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Papua New Guinea has more than 800 languages and cultures from which the current education system emerged, underpinned by neo-colonialism thinking and philosophy (Pasilibban, 2006). The application and implementation of inclusive education programmes in such a diverse cultural context is of course a painstakingly, cumbersome experience for the regular classroom teachers and school administrators. This is apparent when their perspectives, views, practices and actions are greatly influenced by their personal traditional views, stereotype connotations, the contexts of school culture with its associated features and characteristics which includes how the school administrators, teachers and society at large perceive and make meanings out of the status of children with disabilities in inclusive schools and classrooms. The teachers' own traditional belief systems and cultural values are usually assumed to be embedded within the school cultural contexts and thus may have impact on the way teachers and school administrators view children with disabilities and their subsequent inclusion in the regular education system in PNG.

Due to the cultural, social and language complexity in PNG (Aime, 2006), the approach of inclusive education undertaken, if any, would likely be different from other countries (Mitchell, 2005). From the researcher's personal experiences as a teacher and teacher educator in PNG for several years, children with disabilities are often disregarded and they are perceived to be different and are often accorded low social status in society. The notion of being 'different' is evident in the negative attitudes the school administrators, teachers and other people in the society exhibit towards people or children with disabilities. Children with disabilities are often viewed to be problematic in many ways for the family as well as the community, in the classroom and school contexts, and in wider society. They are viewed as being weak, unwieldy, awkward, cumbersome, powerless, having no strength, with deficits in learning and progress, and unable to cope with their normal peers; for instance, in learning and skills acquisition whilst in school. This perception is assumed to have deeply rooted in their cultural beliefs, traditional

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value systems and practices and the way they were taught or trained and eventually subsumed into the education system in PNG.

From the researcher's teaching experience as a teacher in primary schools, secondary schools and Primary Teachers' Colleges in PNG, children's learning is largely influenced by the social culture they experience at the school they attend. The learning needs of children with disabilities are often neglected, or minimally met if any, through the teachers' and school administrators' own actions and attitudes. The school culture, which in this study has been broadly defined as 'everything that is going on in the school based on the features of the school context' (Stoll, 2003), plays a major part in the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms. However, teachers and school administrators in schools in SHP take the school culture for granted and the basic features and practices of the school are often ignored or depend on other sources such as the school inspectors to provide the needed direction and support. This issue is quite prevalent both in schools and in the wider social culture and the specific classrooms in which children with disabilities are assumed to be educated. In other words, the teachers and school administrators ignore or possibly minimally consider the features of the school culture, in order for children with disabilities to be included in the regular schools and classrooms in Southern Highlands Province.

Hence, due to lack of empirical evidence on disabilities, inclusion, and school culture in PNG, the need for the current study emanates from an inclusion ethnography study that was conducted in the USA on inclusion and school culture (Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999). The basic premise identified from this study was that there was a connection between the school culture and inclusive practices. The study identified inclusive leadership, a broad view of school community, and shared language and values as school cultural features and practices which combined to form an inclusive school culture. However, the need to identify other school cultural features and practices that influenced inclusive education were strongly recommended in this study. According to Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu (1999), democracy, community, and inclusive values appear to link

but how the features and practices of the school culture influenced each other did not emerge in their study. Hence, they strongly suggested that:

> It would … be interesting to analyze the extent to which … inclusive culture was influenced by people who chose to work in an urban school. Their appreciation of an urban environment may have a strong influence on their shared understandings, including who "belongs" to their culture. Finally, since our data emerged from one school culture, there may be other features of school culture that have an equal powerful influence on successful inclusion. (Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999, p. 172)

This suggests that the features and practices associated with the school culture are thought to influence the way children with disabilities are given equal educational opportunities in inclusive schools. Most school administrators and teachers in the schools in SHP are generally assumed to have little or no knowledge about the causes and conditions of children with disabilities. From the researcher's teaching experiences, the way such children are taught in the inclusive classroom environment is also minimal or most are excluded from the formal education system. The school cultural features and practices therefore, appear to play a major part in the way school professionals view children with disabilities and their subsequent inclusion in the regular education system in SHP. Hence, in view of the recommendations from the study by Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu (1999) as stated above, there is a need to identify the school cultural features and practices that influence or do not influence inclusive education and the impact on the school culture in four schools in Southern Highlands Province in the hope of giving educational opportunities to children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms.

1.4 Research Setting

The research was done in two remote and two urban schools in Southern Highlands Province in PNG. SHP is one of the 20 provinces in PNG, including the National Capital District (NCD) which operates under a coordinated municipal statutory commission called the National Capital District Commission (NCDC). SHP is divided into three

regions called Central Plateau, Eastern End, and Western End. The Central Plateau includes: Mendi District, Munihiu District, and Lai Valley. The Easter End includes: Imbongu, Ialibu, Pangia, Kagua, and Erave districts. The Western End is made up of Poroma which includes Kutubu, Nipa, Margarima, Tari, Koroba, and Komo districts. Each of these districts is managed by a District Administrator and an Assistant District Administrator. Within the district management team is a Primary School Inspector and District Education Officer (DEO) whose roles are to oversee, coordinate and manage the education system in each district and they are called national officers. They are answerable and thus report to the Senior Primary Schools Inspector located in the provincial capital, Mendi. The Senior Primary Schools Inspector in turn reports directly to the Standards Division within the National Department of Education (NDOE). The current study was conducted in four schools in SHP. Two urban schools were chosen in the Central Plateau and another two rural schools were chosen in the Eastern End of the province. The four schools under study are pseudonym as: Urban-1, Urban-2, Rural-1, and Rural-2 (further explanation of the schools is provided on section 3.2.6 in Chapter Three).

The two urban schools are located about two kilometers apart. The two rural schools are located about a kilometer away from each other in Ialibu District of the Eastern End of SHP. School Urban-1 and Rural-1 are run by the Catholic Church whilst school Urban-2 is run by the United Church. Therefore, according to the PNG education system, these are called church agency schools. School Rural-2 is a government school and is one of the oldest and biggest schools in SHP. All these are regular and community schools. Previously these schools were called community schools because the schools were located and belong to the community. While some children from other outlying areas were accepted, most children were within the community. However, due to the education reform the name altered from community school to primary school which reflected the education structural change. All the schools were in full operation during the time of the study. However, all the schools were not fully staffed with a shortfall of about two to five teachers as compared to the number of positions that were made available to each

school. For instance in school Urban-1, out of the 25 positions that were available two positions were vacant, while 23 were occupied by teachers and school administrators.

1.5 Research Aim

The aim of the study is to identify the school cultural features and practices that influence or do not influence inclusive education and the impact on the teachers, school administrators and the school/classroom practices towards inclusion in four schools in Southern Highlands Province.

1.6 Research Questions

Consistent with the aim of the study, the following research questions will be posed for investigation:

(a) What are the school cultural features and practices identified in the four schools in Southern Highlands Province?

(b) What school cultural features and practices influenced inclusive education in the four schools?

(c) What school cultural features and practices did not influence inclusive education in the four schools?

(d) What extent do the school cultural features and practices impact on the teachers, school administrators and the school/classroom practices towards inclusion?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The philosophies, principles, and practices associated with special education, and inclusive education in particular are quite new to the teachers and school administrators in PNG. That means this study is one of the first pieces of research work ever done on special and inclusive education in PNG, especially in SHP where there was no such study done to date. The study is significant in several ways. First, the study will contribute to

the empirical evidence on the issues pertaining to special education, inclusive education, disabilities, and the school culture on which teachers and school administrators can make informed decisions when including children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms. Second, the study seeks to establish an awareness on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular classrooms. Through awareness, teachers and school administrators can endeavor to change their attitudes, actions, and practices in the hope of giving educational opportunities to children with disabilities in the regular education system in PNG. Third, the study can be used as a guide to inform curriculum developers, policy makers and other education authorities like school inspectors to make informed decisions for school development and improvement where the education needs of children with disabilities can be given appropriate consideration and priority. Finally, the teachers and school administrators can redefine and if appropriate alter the specific features and practices of the school culture in order to accommodate the education needs of children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms in SHP.

1.8 Scope of the Study and its Limitations

This research was a case study of four primary schools in urban and remote settings in Southern Highlands Province, PNG. Therefore, the results of the study may not be generalised to other schools, provinces or PNG at large (Creswell, 2005; Flaherty, 2001). However, the study of four schools and the 19 research participants and methodological triangulation (semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations) have raised the level of reliability of the results and findings of the study (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2000). That means though caution must be taken when generalising the findings to other school and classroom settings, the results may have some similarities that are related to other primary schools in SHP and PNG at large (Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2005) .

During the course of the study, various barriers that were envisaged such as financial and travel from New Zealand to PNG and return were overcome through full NZAID sponsorship support. At the school level, no major impediments were encountered as the teachers and school administrators were fully informed in writing while the researcher

was still in New Zealand and they voluntarily took part in the study. Also the study was purposefully conducted commencing on the third week of term three to avoid teacher absenteeism as used to be the case in SHP schools due to reasons pertaining to remoteness and accessibility. However, in school Rural-1, the principal was unable to take part in the study as he was attending an in-service training for school administrators in school Rural-2 on how to conduct teacher inspections. This was facilitated by the area primary school inspector. The deputy principal of the school took over the principal's role in this situation.

1.9 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter One has provided the introduction and context of the study. Within this chapter, the scene of the research was set out with an explanation of a personal narrative, the background information on PNG, the education system including the primary education sector in current practice. This was followed by the rationale for the study, the research setting, the aim and the major research questions of the study. The significance, scope and limitations of the study were also provided as part of this chapter. Chapter Two provides the related literature that was reviewed for this study. Major issues that emerged from the review include: setting the scene for inclusive education, school culture and inclusive practices, issues pertaining to inclusive legislation and policies, factors and practices that influence inclusion, and inclusive education policies in PNG. These issues are presented as themes for the purposes of coherence and clarity.

The research methodology is detailed in the Third Chapter. This chapter presents the theoretical framework and the research methodology for the study. The chapter also includes the interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm, qualitative research approach, case study research methodology, data collection and analytical methods and processes. Issues relating to reliability and validity, and the ethical considerations that required attention are also discussed in this chapter. Other issues that were encountered during the data collection are also explained for clarity. Chapter Four details the data analysis and findings of the study. Some major themes that emerged include: staff understanding of

special and inclusive education concepts, school cultural leadership and organisational practices, school cultural features/practices and implications for staff, and school cultural policies and practices. These themes are explained and supported by direct quotations from the interviews and observations.

Chapter Five considers the research results identified in Chapter Four and discusses them in relation to the literature review in Chapter Two. The chapter retains the major themes identified in Chapter Four for consistency. Some similarities and differences identified in the urban and rural settings are discussed. The final chapter concludes the entire study with the summary of findings together with the implications of the study. Recommendations for practice and action, and further research are also provided in this chapter in the hope of fostering inclusive education for children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms and for the improvement of the education system in PNG.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the related literature pertaining to the school cultural features and practices and inclusive education. The chapter is divided into five major sections. Firstly, the scene for inclusive education is provided. In this section the definition and the different stages towards achieving full inclusion are described. Secondly, the school culture and inclusive practices are presented. School culture is defined and presented together with the inclusive school culture, inclusive school environment, and inclusive leadership. Thirdly, the chapter talks about issues pertaining to inclusive legislation and policies that underpin inclusion. The fourth section is about the factors and practices that influence inclusive practices. Here research findings on teacher and school factors are discussed. The final section presents inclusive education policies in Papua New Guinea. These issues were considered as being part of the wider school cultural features and practices and thus the literature was reviewed in light of the current study.

2.1 Setting the Scene for Inclusive Education

Setting the scene was considered important in the hope of providing what led to full inclusion.   'Towards a definition of inclusive education' and 'journey to inclusive education' appeared as major themes for discussion. Each of these themes is presented in turn to provide the literature in a coherent manner.

2.1.1 Towards a Definition of Inclusive Education

While the definition of inclusive education has not been formally described in the literature, different commentators have defined and interpreted inclusion along the 'whole school approach' where all children are educated together (Ainscow, 1999; Mitchell, 1999 & 2005). According to Conway (2005), the inclusive education concept has "many meanings and interpretations" (p. 106). However, several authors have attempted to define what constitutes inclusive education. For instance, Mastropieri and Scruggs (2004) defined inclusive education as the education provided for children with disabilities in the regular classroom where instruction is provided by the regular classroom teacher. Mitchell (2005) 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 regular, age-appropriate classes in their neighbourhood school; access to appropriate aids and support services, individualized programmes, with appropriately differentiated curriculum and assessment practices.* (p. 4) [original emphasis]

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 to do with more than mere placement in the regular classroom. "It involves attitudes, values and beliefs that extend beyond schools to the wider community" (Mentis et al., 2005, p. 76). Other scholars have also defined inclusive education as an education 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 regular school contexts.

Inclusive education has also been defined as a 'right' where all children are accepted and taught together in the regular classrooms in view of their basic human rights (Artiles & Dyson, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Mittler, 2005). Zionts (2005) argues that "… full inclusion is designed to accommodate all students with disabilities in general education classrooms (a 'zero reject' model)" (p. 7). While all these definitions and interpretations on inclusion have been considered, the one that was applicable for this study is that "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). However, with appropriate alterations, changes and support provisions to foster learning and participation (Foreman, 2005; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Wood, 2006).

Other organizations have also defined inclusive education in line with their work and aspirations for the education of children with disabilities. For instance, inclusion means giving equal opportunities in terms of educational and social activities where opportunities are provided for all children to take part (Inclusion International, 1998). According to UNESCO (1994), the 'Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education' which was agreed in 1994 by 92 governments and 25 international organizations proclaimed the following to achieve inclusive education:

- every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning;
- every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;
- education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs;
- those with special education needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs;
- regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving an education for all; moreover, they 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, p. viii-ix)

Children with disabilities fall under the fundamentals of defectology (Vygotsky, 1993, cited in Gindis, 2003), functional limitations (Moore, Anderson, Timperley, Glynn, Macfarlane, Brown & Thomson, 1999) or deficit/medical model (Fulcher, 1989; O'Brian & Ryba, 2005). Inclusive education therefore, is to empower children with disabilities through the provision of necessary support services and encouragement which will eventually lead them to live independent lives in the society (Stainback & Stainback, 1992; Villa & Thousand, 2005). It is viewed that when empowering children with disabilities, different cultures need to take into account how teachers and those in authority view them and the means and ways to promote them in their learning in the inclusive school environment (Benjamin, 2002; Bevan-Brown, 2003; Sayeski, 2003). Rather, children with disabilities should be viewed as those children who need special consideration and attention for them to progress through in the education system and eventually live independent lives in their society (Clough & Corbett, 2000; Thomas & Vaughan, 2004).

Children with disabilities may be viewed as to how they learn to assimilate intended curriculum and learning behavioral patterns (Vygotsky, 1993, cited in Gindis, 2003). It is common for children with disabilities to be viewed from the defectology and/or medical model whereby they exhibit shortcomings from mild to severe conditions (Bauer & Shea, 1999). 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 downward spiraling conditions. However, Vygotsky (1993, cited in Gindis, 1993) contended that through the application of appropriate teaching strategies, tailored to meet individual needs, children with disabilities can improve in many areas such as language skills acquisition, social skills development, behavioral deficits and in their academic achievements. What they need 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 work on how they can improve in their deficit areas (O'Brian & Ryba, 2005; Gindis, 2003).

2.1.2 Journey to Inclusive Education

Definition of special needs concepts and discourses. Though special needs refers to both children with special abilities/gifted and talented and those with disabilities (McAlpine & Moltzen, 2004), this review was done based on the latter category as this was the focus of the current study and also this is how the teachers and school administrators view children with special needs in Southern Highlands Province, and Papua New Guinea at large. Forman (2005) argues that the terms 'impairments', 'handicaps', and 'disabilities' are sometimes used interchangeably and their definitions and interpretations are confusing. However, the WHO (1980) has succinctly defined these terms for standard use internationally. Firstly, according to the WHO impairment is the missing or malfunctioning of a body part where abnormality can be evident in psychological, physiological or anatomical structures of a person. Secondly, disability refers to "any restriction or lack (resulting from impairment) or ability to perform activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being" (Skelt, 1993, p. 44). Thirdly, handicap is an associated disadvantage as a consequence of an impairment and this limits role expectations and fulfillment (Skelt, 1993).

Nevertheless, disability being the focus of this study needed further elaboration. Disability is considered to be associated with being blind, deaf, dumb, mental disorders, or other congenital deformity (Forman, 2005; Skelt, 1993). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1980) and Neilson (2005), the above definition is accepted by most governments when defining what constitutes disability. Fulcher (1989) states that disability is referred to as a 'social and political construct' where welfare states use it as a category to regulate their own service delivery provisions. This is supported by Stakes (1988) that when categorizing disabilities, it helps service delivery organizations and institutions to provide services. Webb-Hendy (1995) states that defining disability therefore is important, as this assists service delivery provisions to make people's lives

orderly. On the other hand, the interpretation and understanding of what constitutes disability can help them to manage and foster interactions among people (Fulcher, 1989). Hence, when disability is defined as real, the consequences would be meaningful and real (Oliver, 1990).

The assumptions associated with disability through history and time have been understood and considered along various successive discourses (Fulcher, 1989; Neilson, 2005; Webb-Hendy, 1995). These discourses include: medical, charity, corporate, lay, and recently rights. Fulcher (1989) stated that legislative decisions, educational policies and other practices emanate from the discourse theory. Firstly, the medical discourse entails that "… disability *deficit* [has] individualistic connotations" (Fulcher, 1989, p.27) [original emphasis]. This discourse is also referred to as the medical model (Webb-Hendy, 1995), where specialized services are geared towards remediation of the problems or deficits of individuals. According to Skrtic (1991) and O'Brian and Ryba (2005), the medical discourse results in segregation. The segregation is evident when children are institutionalized for specific expert advice and medication, which deviates from the mainstream system such as education (Ryba & O'Brian, 2005). Secondly, the charity discourse posits that 'people who are disabled' need help and are regarded as objects of pity (Borsay, 1986 & Llewellyn, 1983, cited in Fulcher, 1989). Due to public concerns and empathy, a public awareness fosters help and assistance required for individuals (Webb-Hendy, 1995). It also advocates humanitarianism where clients as recipients are to be grateful for help rendered (Fulcher, 1989).

Thirdly, corporate discourse is about people teaming up as professionals to assimilate and challenge the service provisions towards people living with disabilities (Webb-Hendy, 1995). The lay discourse is based on 'myths and stereotypes' associated with people living with disabilities (Neilson, 2005). This discourse regards people with disabilities as inferior, weak and not worth living (Fine & Asch, 1988; Fulcher, 1989). According to Ballard (1998), this is also associated with the negative attitudes of the public towards people with disabilities. Finally, the rights discourse is politically oriented and it fosters being self-reliant, independent and attempts to provide what the consumer wants as being

worth and good (Fulcher, 1989). The basic premise is being deviated from "… discrimination, exclusion and oppression" (Fulcher, 1989, p. 30). According to O'Brian and Ryba (2005) and Brown (1994), this direction has paved the way for attaining education for all, whether with disabilities or not provision. However, the principles of mainstreaming and integration acted as precursor for the promotion of inclusive practices (Foreman, 2005).

Principles of mainstreaming and integration. The principle of mainstreaming has been regarded as an education policy shift towards achieving education of children with disabilities in regular schools (Cole & Chan, 1990). According to some commentators, the initial intent of mainstreaming was to place children with disabilities and handicapped from segregated settings to the regular schools (Ballard, 1988; Hegarty, 1993; Pijl, Meijer, Hegarty, 1997). However, "Other teachers fear that what may actually happen is 'main dumping', the placement of children who have handicaps into ordinary preschools 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 the regular school (Cole & Chan, 1990). Another achievement is the placement of children with disabilities in an environment which is regarded as 'normal' or 'advantageous' as it is to the non-disabled children (Ballard, 1988; Nirje, 1985; Pijl et al., 1997). However, Wood (2006) points out that when mainstreaming "… a student must demonstrate an ability to keep up with the work performed by nondisabled students" (p. 20).

In western countries, mainstreaming was regarded "… as a culturally normative placement…" (Foreman, 2005, p. 12). In New Zealand for instance, a public education policy in schools was developed based on the classification which was used by the Warnock Report in the United Kingdom (Department of Education, 1988; Webb-Hendy, 1995). According to the Department of Education (1988), the Warnock Report had three interrelated classifications of mainstreaming which include:

1. locational mainstreaming – in this approach children with disabilities are educated in a separate unit or classroom in the regular environment;

2. social mainstreaming – here students who are locationally mainstreamed can socialise and interact in different ways in the learning process in the same regular school; and

3. functional mainstreaming - where students with disabilities spend some or all of their time on the same programme as the class or through programme adaptation in the regular school.

Integration is a complex and broader term used to refer to the placement, attendance, and participation of the students with disabilities in the regular school setting (Foreman, 2005; Hegarty, 1993). According to Cole and Chan (1990) and Zionts (2005), integration is the 'bringing of children together as a whole' away from segregated settings. Foreman (2005) notes that integration is a process where students with disabilities are transferred to a less restricted setting. In integration, opportunities for children with disabilities to interact with 'normal' children and the 'community' are higher than if they were in segregated settings (Foreman, 2005; Hegarty, 1993; Wood, 2006). Nevertheless, Zionts (2005) stated that "Integration and inclusion are not synonymous terms… Integration often refers to contact between disabled and nondisabled groups in settings other than shared classrooms" (p. 6). Presenting a recent direction, Webb-Hendy (1995) stated that "With ongoing changes in educational practice the terminology has altered with use and integration has become inclusion" (p. 23). Hence, rather than delving into the concepts of 'mainstreaming' and 'integration', 'inclusion' is focused on in this study. However, Foreman (2005) argued that "… regardless of all these views, all teachers must now be prepared to provide for the needs of students with a disability in their schools, regardless of whether those students are 'integrated', 'mainstreamed', or 'included'" (p.12).

2.2 School Culture and Inclusive Practices

An explanation of school culture. 'Culture' has been referred to as an intricate and illusive notion (Prosser, 1999), social experience (Corbett, 1999), pluralistic, subjective and dynamic (Rossman, Corbett & Firestone, 1988), and it is situationally unique (Stoll, 1999). "Culture is, however, an extremely useful concept to use in organizational analysis. By this term I mean the set of values, assumptions, knowledge and beliefs upon which a particular organization bases its behavior" (Jones, 1996, p. 124). That means culture is a complex phenomenon (A. Hargreaves, 1994), and is difficult to define and interpret (Carrington, 1999; D. Hargreaves & Hopkins, 2005). According to Deal and Peterson (1999), culture is associated with deeper structures of human life and is transmitted in social contexts through language and expressive actions. Stoll and Fink (1996) also affirm that culture is implicit and only the surface aspects are seen which makes it difficult to capture and interpret. These authors claim that cultural rules and rituals abound in school contexts, hence it is important to define and understand it.

Some commentators define and interpret 'school culture' from the organizational perspective. For instance, culture has been interpreted as;

> observed behavioural regularities, including language and rituals; norms that evolve in working groups; dominant values espoused by an organization; philosophy that guides an organisation's policy; rules of the game for getting along in the organisation; and the feeling or climate conveyed in an organization… These are the heart of the school culture and are what makes it so hard to grasp and change (Schein, 1985, cited in Stoll, 1999, p. 33).

More simply, school culture has been defined as 'the way we do things here' (Deal & Kennedy, 1983; D. Hargreaves, 1994; D. Hargreaves & Hopkins, 2005; Stoll, 1999). In defining 'school culture' from New Zealand perspective, Whyte (2005) stated that "school culture is one of the most complex concepts in education because at its core is the deeper level of shared basic assumptions and beliefs that operate unconsciously as the accepted way 'things are done'" (p. 120). Prosser (1999) vehemently argues that past commentators have talked about school climate, ethos, tone, atmosphere and character as

school metaphors. The school metaphors are aspects of the wider school culture which members assume to hold in common (D. Hargreaves, 1994). Prosser (1999) argues that:

> However, they [school metaphors] are limiting since, by their nature, they incline and confine our understanding to very particular aspects of schooling while neglecting significant others. The cultural perspective is a more beneficial way of viewing schools because it provides encompassing methodological and theoretical frameworks that are less limiting then other metaphors. (p. xii)

Stoll (1999) supports that school culture attempts to describe and act as a screen or lens to view the actions and practices of actors in schools. Stoll further states that school culture acts as a 'glue' that holds everyone together for positive impact on the institutional practices. Considering New Zealand as a multicultural nation, Whyte (2005) stated that taking advantage of people from diverse cultural backgrounds, there is a need to develop more individual inclusive school culture which would reflect the character of the community. Deal and Kennedy (1983) expressed that each school is seen as a different social reality and mindset of life and 'how things are done'. Stoll (1999) succinctly puts, "… school cultures vary. What is particularly interesting, however, is that schools with similar context characteristics have different mindsets" (p. 33).

School culture is about 'shared language' (Rossman, Corbett & Firestone, 1988). Shared language is understandings that emerge from interactions of a given group (Creswell, 2005; Henstrand, 2006), and are evident in their behaviour, actions and practices (Prosser & Warburton, 1999; Rossman et al., 1988). In their study, Rossman et al. (1988) found that the shared language played a major part in understanding school culture as it influenced organisational members, new comers and enabled changes within the organisation. Hence, they recommended studying 'shared language' to understand school culture. However, Zollers et al. (1999) pointed out that the assumptions associated with shared language are ingrained with members of the school organisation. Thus the deep-seated 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).

In order to meet the diverse needs of all students in the school culture, schools in New Zealand have adopted two approaches (Whyte, 2005). The first approach is taking the 'accommodation' pathway, which attempts to accommodate the cultural and student diversity within the existing school culture. These schools work towards identifying the cultural and student diversity in the community and develop appropriate activities in their existing programmes. The second approach is 'reculturing' pathway, which is an attempt to change the existing school culture. Within this approach inclusive schools are based on cultural aspirations, preferences and practices which are evident in diverse communities (Stoll, 2000).

Inclusive school culture. Research on school culture has focussed on school improvement (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993), how leaders influence the school culture (Marshall, 1988), and the ability of school leaders to manage and organise school contexts (D. Hargreaves & Hopkins, 2005; Harris, 1992). Other researchers have also looked at school culture in terms of school reform and organisational culture (Donahoe, 1993; Sarason, 1996). Inclusive school culture has however, been recently considered (Carrington, 1999). For instance, in analysing 19 research findings on the development and contexts of successful inclusive schools, Hunt and Goetz (1997) found that the characteristics of the school programmes were influenced by 'morally driven commitment to children' and 'a consensus of a set of values' considered to be appropriate for inclusive cultural improvement. In another study on the connection between school culture and inclusion, three underlying features of school culture were identified (Zollers et al., 1999). These features include: an inclusive leader, broad vision of school community, and shared language and values. They found that these three school cultural features combined to create a successful inclusive culture. However, the study was based on formal and informal interviews, participant observations and document analysis of one urban school only.

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A study by Carrington (1999) on inclusive practices needing a different school culture found that teachers' beliefs and values affected inclusive education. Teachers' ideals and knowledge did influence how they implemented inclusive education practices. According to Carrington (1999) and Thomas (1985), school cultural factors at the institutional and personal levels that influence inclusive education have been identified. These include school policy, the allocation of students in class, the attitudes of principals to inclusion, quality of support provided by support staff and agencies, relationship between the special education staff and regular teachers, and the teachers' level of confidence in selecting appropriate teaching methods. However, all these studies were done in western countries and no one study compared how school culture influenced inclusive education from rural and urban settings in developing countries, particular in Pacific nations.

Inclusive school environment as wider school culture. The school environment is considered as a wider school culture (D. Hargeaves, 1999; Prosser, 1999). However, Mitchell (1999) argued that the physical environment and the school climate can be the biggest barrier for full inclusion to take effect. For instance, 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 Mitchell (1999) who said that "Where necessary, all equipment and apparatus is specifically adapted for use by students with special education needs" (p. 14). McNary, Glasgow and Hicks (2005) 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. That means 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. Nevertheless, Clough and Corbett (2000) cautioned that the adaptation and access to the physical environment would not be possible if the teachers and the school administration at large are not proactive to the changes that are required in order to accommodate children with disabilities in the regular schools.

"The school environment was considered a reflection of the school culture and was considered to show in a very broad way, how there had been physical accommodation to the ideology of inclusion" (Webb-Hendy, 1995, p. 133). Hence, school management practices have to consider how the school environment can be created which would foster inclusive practices. According to Webb-Hendy (1995), there are three essential elements that have to be considered when making decisions to change the school environment with the aim of promoting inclusion. These include assuring safety, mobility and the provision to encourage independence for children with disabilities. These are issues that were considered at the school level by the principals, the school boards and the classroom teachers at a more personal level. The main issue identified in the study was that frustration was held by the principals, boards of trustees and the teachers because the government did not provide adequate financial support for changes towards achieving inclusive education.

According to Webb-Hendy (1995), internal and external school environments influence the way children with disabilities are included in the regular classroom. Internal school environment refers to what was going on in the school and classroom contexts. She explained in reference to the school architecture and disability conditions that provided the variations in which the school environment was organised. These include: the way movement and mobility was fostered inside and outside of the classrooms and between classrooms or the entire school setting, space within the classrooms to accommodate children with different disability conditions and in particular those in wheelchairs, crutches or callipers. Webb-Hendy (1995) suggested that flexibility was necessary and essential for the teachers to manoeuvre and accommodate children with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. She further goes on to say that the issue of space is closely associated with children's safety, particularly children with disabilities such as the hearing impaired, visually impaired and those with physical disabilities, for example in chairs. The kind and level of assistance rendered also depended on the class size and the classroom organisation, which was a personal choice and concern for the classroom teachers. From this study two issues emerged: firstly, the teacher taking responsibility in the inclusive education process and secondly, this also created frustration, stress and

anxiety. Some teachers during the study expressed concern about the need to create space to accommodate withdrawal and for one-to-one or group study (Webb-Hendy, 1995). Webb-Hendy found that re-use of the existing space within the individual classrooms was the most appropriate option rather than going through different processes like getting full consent from the building board to extend the buildings and the classroom space.

The external school environment needs to be considered as part of the wider school culture that influences inclusive education (Webb-Hendy, 1995). She argued that when changes are made to the school environment, this allowed for the enrolment and placement of children in the inclusive classrooms. There is a close relationship between how schools encourage students to be enrolled in schools and which classroom or school context to fit them (Carrington, 1999; Flavell, 2001). That means once children are enrolled, their placement needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis in order to meet individual child's needs. Webb-Hendy (1995) further goes on to state that there are two fundamental issues that have to be considered in regards to the external school environment. Firstly, there needs to be a provision made for children with disabilities whereby the facilities and premises open to public are reasonably available to them to use. For instance, in New Zealand this is supported by the Disabled Person's Community Welfare Act of 1975 (section 25) where the school environment is created in a way that is conducive to fostering inclusion and learning. Secondly, the way the school environment is structured and created can have impact on the general inclusive education practices. That means the buildings, stairways, walkways and other physical features of the school have to ensure children with disabilities are accommodated within the regular schools (Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Zionts, 2005). In New Zealand this provision is supported by the Building Act of 1991, where relevant changes and alterations made must comply with established rules and regulatory requirements. The changes that are made to the school environment surely would have impact in the way the needs of children with disabilities are met in inclusive environments (Villa & Thousand, 1995; Webb-Hendy, 1995).

A number of studies have examined environmental factors and the teachers' practices and actions towards the inclusion of children with disabilities (Centre & Ward, 1987; Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Myles & Simpson, 1989). These authors respectively stated that one fact that has consistently been found to be associated with positive actions and practices is the availability of support services at the classroom and the school levels. Here support could be seen as both physical in the form of resources, teaching materials, and restructured physical environment, and human, which among others include learning support assistants, special education teachers, and speech therapists. In another study, Janney, Snell, Beers and Raynes (1995) found that the majority of teachers in their study were hesitant initially to accept children with disabilities in their classes. This was because they anticipated a worst case scenario where both themselves as educators and the children with disabilities would be left to fend for themselves. However, they found that later the teachers under study were receptive towards the children with disabilities after having received necessary and sufficient support. The respondents further acknowledged that the support received from the relevant authorities was instrumental in allaying their apprehension that inclusive educational practices would result in extraordinary workloads. It was also revealed that a significant restructuring of the physical environment, which includes making the buildings accessible to students with physical disabilities and the provision of an adequate and appropriate equipment and materials were also instrumental in the development of those positive views and actions. Besides those mentioned by Janney et al. (1995), other forms of physical support such as the availability of adapted teaching materials (Center & Ward, 1987; LeRoy & Simpson, 1996) and smaller classes (Bowman, 1986; Center & Ward, 1987; Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Harvey, 1985), have also been found to generate positive teacher views, actions and practices towards inclusive education.

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 instance, Avramidis et al. (2000) reported overcrowded classrooms, insufficiently pre-prepared materials and differentiated packages, insufficient time to plan with learning support team, lack of modified and

flexible timetables, inadequate available support from external specialists and lack of regular in-service training opportunities as being some of the obstacles that contributed to teachers forming various mindsets 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 et al., 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 regular 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 (Cough & Corbbet, 2000; Peterson & Hittie, 2003). In this respect, human and physical support can be seen as important factors in generating positive actions and practices among regular education teachers towards the inclusion of children with disabilities.

Inclusive school leadership. Culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin in that leaders first create cultures when they create groups and organisations (Sergiovanni, 2001). According to D. Hargreaves and Hopkins (2005), building inclusive school cultures requires strong leadership commitment from the school administration. Leadership has been described as a fundamental condition for school improvement (Stoll & Fink, 1996). D. Hargreaves and Hopkins (2005) maintain that one of the vital aspects of school cultural improvement is the quality of the leadership of the heads of the school. "Creating an inclusive school system requires visionary leadership in overall programme and policy" (Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty, 1997, p. 70). Deal and Peterson (1999) argue that visionary leaders ensure that they understand the school's patterns, the purpose they serve and how they came to be in the position they occupy. Having a vision for the school is one of the vital variables that is essential for successful inclusion (Villa & Thousand, 1995). However, Sergiovanni (2001) argues that leaders can be major obstacles for school change and improvement. He states that symbolic leadership with no sense of purpose and value rarely achieves capacity building and commitment from the staff members within a school community.

Harris (1992) and Marshall (1988) found that due to the unique cultural climate of each school, what goes on in each school context is shaped and influenced by decisions of leaders. Hence, D. Hargreaves and Hopkins (2005) stated that inclusive practices must be underpinned by the following school leadership characteristics and values:

- *inspires* commitment to the school's mission which gives direction and purpose to its work;
- *co-ordinates the work of the school* by allocating roles and delegating responsibilities within structures that support collaboration between school and its partners;
- is actively and visibly *involved* in the planning and implementation of change, but it is ready to delegate and value the contributions of colleagues;
- knows how to *listen and respond* positively to the ideas and complaints of colleagues, governors and parents without feeling threatened;
- is a *skilled communicator*, keeping everyone informed about important decisions and events;
- has the capacity to *stand back* from daily life in order to challenge what is taken for granted, to anticipate problems and to spot opportunities;
- *cares* passionately for the school, its members and reputation, but has the ability to appraise strengths and weaknesses in order to preserve and build upon the best of current practice and to remedy deficiencies;
- emphasizes the *quality of teaching and learning* about which he or she has high expectations of all staff and all pupils, whilst recognizing that support and encouragement are needed for everyone to give their best. (p. 20) [original emphasis]

Other researchers on school leadership and inclusion have also placed emphasis on the institutional change (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999). By using interview and observation methods, these authors have identified six interrelated functions of inclusive school leadership. These functions include: providing a collective vision, encouragement and recognition, obtaining resources, adapting standard operating procedures, monitoring the improvement effort, and handling aspects that disturb change. The study identified not only all leadership functions being carried out, but multiple individuals were executing different roles. Also people without formal authority made unique but significant contributions for the success of the inclusive school culture. However, Lipsky and Gartner (1996) found these leadership functions for inclusion to overlap each other in school contexts. Carrington (1999) states that in order for inclusive practices to move

forward, school leaders have to consider their core values, experiences and skills of their staff to engage in responsible decisions that support inclusive practices. Webb-Hendy (1995) stated, "The fact that inclusion succeeds to the degree it does in the schools in the study, is because the school culture supports the change, there is decision-making occurring at the school level which emphasises this educational change and the professional staff have taken responsibility on a personal basis" (p. vii). The continuous encouragement and support from the head teachers and school authorities has also been mentioned in several studies as being instrumental in influencing positive teacher approaches and practices towards inclusion. For instance, according to work by Janney et al. (1995), the enthusiasm from head teachers was an attributing factor for the success of the part-time integration programme in the schools they studied. Chazan (1994), in his review of relevant literature, concluded that teachers in regular schools have a greater tolerance of inclusion and integration if head teachers are supportive. Similarly, Center and Ward (1987) report that regular education teachers whose head teachers had provided some form of support for the inclusive education programmes, were more positive towards its implementation than those who had not received any.

2.3 Issues Pertaining to Inclusive Legislation and Policies

Since the 1980s, the education system in New Zealand was driven towards gaining equal learning opportunities for all children, an activity which was underpinned by the rights-oriented approach (Brown, 1994; O'Brian & Ryba, 2005). According to Mitchell (1999) and O'Brian and Ryba (2005), this direction was supported by the parent movement whereby it was viewed that parents had to voice their views for the education of all children, with a particular focus on children with disabilities to be included in the regular education system. Thus the schools in New Zealand adopted an educational culture which advocated the accommodation of diversity (Moltzen, 2005). In order to foster the learning of all children, schools had to develop their own school based policies and practices which foster the accommodation of all children regardless of their special needs, race, gender, and other disparities associated with disorders (Mentis, Quinn, & Ryba, 2005; O'Brian & Ryba, 2005). Mitchell (1999) supported that inclusive schools in

New Zealand should develop a clear sense of purpose and coherent and consistent internal policies which could be reflected in actions and practices in the wider school culture.

The development of inclusive education policies and practices is a step towards advocating the education of children with disabilities in the inclusive education system (Mentis, Quinn & Ryba, 2005). That means inclusive education policies and practices have to advocate that all members, whether with disabilities or not are accepted and valued as people with rights and potential to excel in the inclusive classroom in particular and eventually in wider society. According to Mitchell (1999), inclusive education policies enable everyone to be accorded equal status regardless of the level of functioning or other personal characteristics that are associated with humans such as disabilities or being gifted and talented. However, O'Brian and Ryba (2005) argued that from the historical perspective, the education of children with disabilities went through several stages before the realization of how this category of children could be fully included into the regular education system (see section 2.1.2). In New Zealand for instance, due to the ideas of educating children with disabilities being derived from the principles and practices that were formulated and used mostly in the United States, full inclusion did not take effect that quickly (Mitchell, 1999; O'Brian & Ryba, 2005).

However, unlike the United States where the education of children with disabilities was underpinned by legislation such as the Public Law 94-142, Education of All Handicapped Children Act 1975, New Zealand went through several stages of reform. Initially children with special needs were educated in segregated settings, then there was a shift to integration through partial inclusion, and finally full inclusion as advocated by Special Education 2000 (Mitchell, 1999; Schmidt & Harriman, 1998). According to Smith, Polloway, Patton, and Dowdy (2004), mainstreaming or integration were viewed as vital steps towards recognizing the importance of educating those children with disabilities together with their non-disabled peers in the regular education system. From a New Zealand perspective, Mitchell (2000) asserted that this process of inclusion was vital because people and the government, as well as other non-government organizations came

to realize the importance of educating children with disabilities in the regular education system. Connell (2004) stated that children with disabilities are human beings and thus they deserve to be accorded the same rights and welfare support provisions as those available to other children in their community.

The direction undertaken in New Zealand for the education of children with disabilities is a move towards achieving an education system for all children, whether with disabilities or not (Mentis, Quinn, & Ryba, 2005; Ministry of Education, 1999a).   This is underpinned by the adoption of an inclusive education framework through the Special Education 2000 policy document (Ministry of Education, 1999b). According to Mentis, Quinn and Ryba (2005), the main aim of Special Education 2000 was to achieve a world-class inclusive education system that attempted to provide learning opportunities of equal quality and value to all children in New Zealand. The inclusion of all children with disabilities into the mainstream education system in New Zealand is underpinned by relevant legislation and regulations (Mitchell, 1999; O'Brian & Ryba, 2005).   For instance, some of the legislative mechanisms enacted have embraced the basic rights of children with disabilities and are directed towards achieving full inclusion. However, Mitchell (1999) argued that despite the attempt to achieve inclusive education in New Zealand, the government has not fully defined inclusion. Nevertheless, according to O'Brian and Ryba (2005), some of the major acts that support the inclusion of children with special needs into the mainstream education system in New Zealand include: the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994, Human Rights Act 1993, New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, and the Education Act 1989. Connelly (2004) stated that these policies were further translated into regulatory requirements to further enhance the education of children with disabilities in the mainstream education system. Some of these policies include the New Zealand Disability Strategy, 2001; the Special Education Policy Guidelines, 1995; National Education Guidelines, 1993; and the New Zealand Curriculum Framework, 1993 (Mentis, Quinn, & Ryba, 2005; Mitchell, 1999).   Further, the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 is also another major document in New Zealand which encourages collaboration and consultation in decision making processes based on the rights of individuals (Connelly, 2004; Mitchell, 1999). It can be seen that the policies

and regulatory requirements have acted as cornerstones on which the education of children in New Zealand is based and advanced, and which gives greater impetus and recognition to children with disabilities as active members of society.

Schools have to develop policies that would cater for a wide spectrum of children with disabilities (O'Brian & Ryba, 2005). If one is endeavouring to achieve inclusive education, the policies formulated must be executed with a view of fostering full inclusive practices at the school level (Mitchell, 1999). With the introduction of Special Education 2000 in New Zealand in 1995, schools were required to develop their own policies on special needs (Ministry of Education, 2000, & 1999b). According to Mentis, Quinn, and Ryba (2005) and Mitchell (1999), some of the major areas that were intended to be covered, particularly on issues pertaining to professional support and funding considerations in the inclusive education policies like Special Education 2000 include: Special Education Grant (SEG), Ongoing Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS) and the development of cluster groups for Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), and the Severe Behaviour Initiative (SBI). Connolly (2004) argues that inclusive education is compatible with the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi, where schools are required to develop policies that would see people working collaboratively and consultatively with respect for one another. In other words, specific inclusive school policies were expected to be developed in ways that are in line with relevant legislation and regulations, and the Treaty of Waitangi. Therefore, the legislation that was passed stated that inclusive school policies in New Zealand have to focus on specific areas, such as children who are not achieving and those who are at risk of not achieving at school, and children who have specific special needs like the gifted and talented Mitchell (1999). Mentis, Quinn and Ryba (2005) contend that good school policy would recognize that all children have rights to access resources, facilities and the learning that takes place in the classroom. Referring to the development of school policies in New Zealand schools, Mitchell (1999) states that:

> *In keeping with the Education Act and the Human Rights Act, the school accepts all students in its local area*; [and]

The school has a policy that all children with special educational needs are accepted as having full rights of access to all the educational resources and programs provided to and by the school. This is clearly expressed in written policies and other materials that are readily available to staff, parents/caregivers and students. (p. 8)

However, the Ministry of Education (2000) and Schmidt and Harriman (1998) collectively believed that inclusive school policies would not work as expected if various stake-holders such as the school administrators, teachers, professionals and others who have interest in the children do not work to ensure that the legislations and policies developed are translated into practice.

2.4 Factors and Practices that Influence Inclusion

The literature talks about different factors and practices that influence inclusive education. However, for the success of inclusive education, teacher and school related factors and practices have appeared to greatly influence how children with disabilities are included in the regular schools. Hence, the following sections will talk about how these two aspects influence inclusive practices.

2.4.1 Teacher related factors and practices for inclusion

Studies in the social-cognitive field have shown that teacher's beliefs, attitudes, actions and practices towards student diversity and heterogeneity play a major part when including all children into the regular education system (Semmel, Abernathy, Butera & Lesar, 1991; Silva & Morgado, 2004). In particular, research suggests that some teachers possess low academic expectations in relation to children with disabilities (Silva & Morgado, 2004). 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 children with no special needs requirements. This was partly due to their personal experiences as well as their perceptions whereby such children were thought to be lacking to exhibit appropriate social and academic behavioural patterns. In another study,

Mushoriwa (2001) assumed that teacher attitudes can affect the way they perceive, value, judge, interact with and teach children with visual impairment in regular classrooms. In other research, it was found that teachers' perceptions and actions can shape the way inclusive education is promoted (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). These researchers in their studies 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 regular education system. 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 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 (Wilezenski, (1992, cited in Booth & Ainscow, 2002). The same teachers also were more accepting of students with physical disabilities than those that required academic modifications to suit their needs. Such research indicates that the types of disability and the demands it eventually makes on the teacher, would influence teachers' actions and practices towards including a child with such a special need in a regular class (Mushoriwa, 2001). In the work by Reezigi and Jan Pul (1998, cited in Booth & Ainscow, 2002) in the Netherlands, it was found that many pupils who had been included in a regular class wanted to go back to their special schools after suffering isolation and stigmatisation through the teachers' actions and practices in the regular classroom. 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 disability rather than mitigating inclusion (Mushoriwa, 2001). Jangira and Srinivasan (1991) surveyed 59 educational administrators, 48 principals, 37 special education teachers and 96 regular classroom teachers from 47 randomly selected schools that were involved in the implementation of inclusive education programmes to

determine their views and actions to the education of children with disabilities in regular schools. They found that the special education teachers were more positive towards children with disabilities, followed by the educational administrators and school principals. Regular classroom teachers exhibited the least positive responses. In a similar study, Panda (1991) examined the actions and practices of 100 regular classroom teachers towards various types of disabilities in the State of Orissa in India. She found that teachers were generally negatively disposed towards children with epileptic disorders, emotional disturbance, and moderate and severe mental retardation. These results therefore show that prior to teaching, teachers' views, perceptions and actions need to be considered and they must be given adequate training on how to cater for the needs of children with disabilities in the regular classrooms.

However, despite the general acceptance of the principle of inclusion, some studies suggest that teachers do not seem to be ready for it (Semmel, Abernathy, Butera & Lesar, 1991). This scenario is also supported in Scruggs and Mastropieri's (1996) review of the studies conducted between 1956 and 1995, which concluded that about 70% of teachers supported the concept of mainstreaming, but only a third felt that they had sufficient time, skills, training or resources to support the practice of full inclusion. Nonetheless, at the international level, researchers and educators who are interested in the education of children with disabilities are working towards achieving an education system that is more inclusive and one that fosters the education of all children (Ainscow, 1999, Ainscow, Farrell & Tweddle, 2000; Ballard, 2003; Fraser, Slee, 2000 & 2001). This is because teachers think that inclusion of all students teaches the student and his or her peers that all persons are equally valued members of the society and that it is worthwhile to do whatever it takes to include everyone (Silva & Morgado, 2004).

According to some early American studies on 'full inclusion' results indicated that teachers were not supportive of a full placement of pupils with special education needs in regular schools (Silva & Morgado, 2004). Coates (1989) for example, reported that general education teachers in Iowa in the United States did not have a negative view of pullout programmes, nor were they supportive of 'full inclusion'. Similar findings were

reported by Semmel et al. (1991) who, after having surveyed 381 early childhood educators, both general and special in Illinois and California, in the United States, concluded that those educators were dissatisfied with a special education system that operated pullout special education programmes. Another American study by Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher & Saumell (1996) examined regular 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. The teachers under study identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion; including class size, inadequate resources, the extent to which all students would benefit from inclusion, and lack of adequate teacher training and preparation.

However, in studies where teachers had active experiences of inclusion, contradictory findings were reported. For instance, Villa, Thousand, Meyers and Nevin (1996) suggested the inclusion of children with disabilities in the ordinary school promoted positive consequences. The researchers noted that teacher commitment often emerges at the end of the implementation cycle after the teachers have gained mastery of the professional expertise needed to implement inclusive programmes. This finding was also reflected in Sebastian and Mathot-Bucker's (1998) case study of a senior high school and a middle school in a Washington District school, USA, where students with severe learning difficulties had been included in the regular education system. Interviews were carried out with 20 teachers at the beginning and end of the school year to determine their actions and practices on inclusion. The teachers felt that inclusion was working well and, although more support was needed, it was perceived as a huge challenge. Similar findings were reported by LeRoy and Simpson (1996) who studied the impact of inclusion over a three-year period in the state of Michigan, USA. Their study showed that as teachers get to know and teach children with disabilities, their confidence to teach these children also increased. The evidence provided seems to indicate that teachers' negative or neutral attitudes, actions and practices at the beginning of an innovation such as inclusive education programmes may change over time as a result of gaining teaching

experience and the expertise that develops through the process of implementation. This conclusion was also reported in the United Kingdom (UK) survey of teachers' actions and practices in some Local Education Authority (LEA) schools, where teachers who had been implementing inclusive programmes for some years felt more positive about inclusion than the rest of the sample who had little or no such experience (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000). These findings therefore, show that teachers' own experiences and expertise with children with disabilities play a greater part in the way teachers perceive and act in inclusive classrooms.

A great deal of research regarding teacher characteristics has sought to determine the relationship between those characteristics and the teachers' actions and practices towards children with disabilities. Researchers have explored a host of specific teacher variables such as gender, age, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, contact with children with disabilities and other personality factors, which might have impacted upon teacher acceptance of the principle of inclusion. However, a synthesis of the first three teacher characteristics is worth presenting as they are assumed to be related to the current study.

Gender. With regards to gender, the evidence appears inconsistent as some researchers noted that female teachers had a greater tolerance level for inclusive education than did the male teachers (Aksamit, Morris and Leunberger, 1987; Eichinger, Rizzo and Sirotnik, 1991; Thomas, 1985). Harvey (1985) for example, found that there was a marginal tendency for female teachers to express more positive views and actions towards including children with behavioural problems than male teachers. Others (e.g., Beh-Pajooh, 1992; Berryman, 1989; Leyser, Kapperman & Keller, 1994), however, did not report that gender was related to what they perceived. Instead they argued that teacher actions and practices change to a lesser or greater extent when considering the types of disabilities and problems that teachers are faced with in real classroom contexts. Nevertheless, they commented that different people may view various disability conditions differently, and this can change their perceptions and practices towards inclusion or for the provision for other appropriate educational programmes and support.

Age and teaching experiences. Teaching experience is another teacher-related variable cited by several studies as having an influence on teachers' actions and practices (Berryman, 1989; Center & Ward, 1987; Cough & Lindsay, 1991). They 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 highest among teachers with less than six years of teaching 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 regular classrooms. Forlin 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.

Leyser et al. (1994) also found that in general, teachers with 14 years or less teaching experience had a significantly higher positive score in their responses to inclusion compared to those with more than fourteen (14) years. They 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. 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. In this respect, it would not be unreasonable to assume that newly qualified teachers hold positive views towards inclusion when entering the inclusive educational settings. However, although the above study indicated that 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; Rogers, 1987; Stephens & Braun, 1980). According to Avramidis et al. (2000), this difference may be due to the fact that people's attitudes, actions and practices change when encountered by different

programmes, challenges and problems associated with educational innovations and practices.

Training experiences. Another factor which has attracted considerable attention is the knowledge about children with disabilities gained through formal studies during pre-service and in-service training (Mentis, et al., 2005). They argued that training was considered an important factor in improving teachers' views and actions towards the implementation of inclusive education policies. 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 regular 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) based on teachers in the colleges. Both studied the views of college teachers in the United Kingdom (UK) towards students with disabilities and their inclusion into ordinary college courses. 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 did those who had no such training. Several other studies conducted in the USA (Buell et al., 1999; Van-Reusen, Shoho & Barker, 2000), in Australia (Center & Ward, 1987), and the UK (Avramadis et al., 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 for the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms. Dickens-Smith (1995) also studied the perceptions of both regular and special eductors towards inclusion. Her respondents were given an attitude survey before and after the development of the teacher training programme. Both groups of respondents revealed more favourable views towards inclusion after their in-service training than they did before, with regular education teachers showing the strongest positive views. Dickens-Smith 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 regular school. Using a pre-test/post-test multiple measures design involving more than 80 teachers, the study assessed the impact of training on teachers' knowledge and confidence about participation and accommodation. These include accommodation decisions for hypothetical students and actual accommodation decisions for the following year. The results indicated that after training, there was a stronger relationship among participation/accommodation, curriculum, and instructional needs. Teachers expressed high confidence in their ability to make accommodation decisions after training. 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. 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.

2.4.2 School related factors and practices for inclusion

Professional and para-professional support. Professionals are those regarded as having expert knowledge and skills like psychologists, psychiatrists, physiotherapists and speech therapists (Gargiulo, 2003). These are people who are assumed to provide expert advice in areas such as assessment, planning, and the evaluation of children with disabilities to ascertain their conditions and recommend and/or provide necessary educational support. For instance, with the introduction of Special Education 2000 in New Zealand since 1995, a child who exhibits severe behaviour difficulties is assessed by a behavioural specialist such as a psychologist or psychiatrist (Ministry of Education, 1999b & 1998). Specialists employed by the government and working in Group Special Education (GSE) collaborate to develop intervention plans which are specifically designed to improve students' behavioural problems and social skills. These are the

behaviour support teachers (Mentis, Quinn & Ryba, 2005). It is assumed that such an action would lead to teachers maximizing students' learning opportunities in inclusive classrooms in New Zealand.

Paraprofessionals such as support staff collaborate with professionals, parents and teachers to help the children with special needs (Gargiulo, 2003; Smith et al., 2004). In a recent study in the Waikato region in New Zealand, Connelly (2004) found that support staff, like teacher aides, played significant roles in enhancing the learning opportunities of children with disabilities, together with the actions and practices of classroom teachers and school principals. That means inclusive schools value and embrace the input of support staff and they are regarded as invaluable members of the collaborative team. However, Smith et al. (2004) maintain that paraprofessionals have to be trained in areas such as better ways of interaction, communication and conflict management skills. This is supported by Connelly (2004) that the training of teacher's aides has to precede their involvement so that once they become a member of the collaborative team they are knowledgeable and better informed on their roles and duties. Nevertheless, Connelly (2004) further argued that in reality the training of paraprofessionals is often ignored which can lead to duplication of jobs for the classroom teacher and they can sometimes appear to be confused as to their role while on the job.

Professional and paraprofessional input through multidisciplinary teams plays a vital role in enhancing learning opportunities for children with special needs in inclusive classrooms (Gargiulo, 2003; Schmidt & Harriman, 1998). Their contributions are often found to be useful because the kinds of support services and opportunities that they provide include varied levels of expertise, experiences, perspectives and other invaluable contributions so that they can render support for the learning and progress of children with disabilities (Clough & Corbett, 2000). Professionals and paraprofessionals should work towards developing a working culture that is based on common understanding, shared knowledge leading towards achieving common goals (Idol, 2002). However, Mitchell (1999) strongly argued that the necessary support systems must be appropriate and dependent on the nature of the child's special and specific learning needs. For

instance, the planning, formulation and implementation of individualized education programme (IEP) is one major way through which professionals, as well as paraprofessionals can collaborate to help the child with disabilities, with the input from parents and teachers in inclusive schools (Mitchell, 1999; Moltzen, 2005; O'Brian & Ryba, 2005).

According to Smith et al. (2004), when professionals and paraprofessionals collaborate, their intent and actions must be goal oriented so that they work towards achieving a specific outcome. Gargiulo (2003) and Mitchell (1999) respectively proposed that positive working relationships must be developed and built so that, with the understanding of each other, they can share their expertise and views and develop a plan that serves the best interest of the child, rather than their own. In so doing, professionals and paraprofessionals, with the support of the teachers and parents can develop common working plans that will target individual special need areas focusing on academic, social and behavioural aspects of learning and development of the child (Clough & Corbett, 2000). This view is supported by Smith et al. (2004) that on the basis of establishing a common course of action, professionals and paraprofessionals alike can view themselves as change agents who are there with their wealth of experience and knowledge to instil changes for the good of the child with disabilities.

Furthermore, support for specialist resource teachers was also identified as an important factor in shaping positive teacher actions and practices to inclusion (Kauffman, Lloyd & McGee, 1989). Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes (1995) found that one of the factors cited by their respondents that had contributed to the success of the inclusive education programmes they were implementing was the existence of effective support, both interpersonal and task-related, provided by the school's special education teachers. Clough and Lindsay (1991) argued that special education specialist teachers are important co-workers in providing advice to subject specialist teachers on how to make a particular subject accessible to children with disabilities. Center and Ward (1987) found that children with a mild sensory disability included in regular classes did not cause anxiety to the regular education teachers because of the confidence generated by the

presence of itinerant teachers for these children. Their study showed that experience of working with itinerant teachers positively affected teachers' actions, attitudes and practices in the inclusive environment.

Parents and teacher collaboration.   In inclusive classrooms, parents and teacher consultation and collaboration are important aspects that would encourage and foster positive learning outcomes of children with disabilities (Gargiulo, 2003; Smith et al., 2004). That means parents and teachers must develop practices that are based on mutual respect for one another and value each other's contributions. This is supported by Fraser (2005) that "When families have children with …[disabilities], the formation of relationships with a range of organizations (such as schools) and individuals (such as teachers) can be mutually beneficial and far from personal" (p. 129). While teachers also do play an important role in the education of children with disabilities, parents have to realise that they are the immediate care-givers of the child and whatever help they render will surely have an impact on the child's academic as well as social relationships (Frazer, 2005).   According to Moltzen (2005), one way this can be done is through forming partnership teams with the hope of implementing individualized education programmes (IEPs) which target specific behavioural, social and academic problems that are exhibited by the child with disabilities. In one study for instance by Thomson and Rowan (1995), it was found that the partnership aspect of the IEP process was rated the most positive element that fostered parents' and teachers' actions for collaboration. However, Mitchell (1999) and Moltzen (2005) respectively argued that in many IEP processes, there is evidence of imbalance of power between the parents and other professionals, which can be evidenced through their attitudes and actions. In other words, parents may not view themselves as equal partners in the collaborative and consultative course of action, particularly when making decisions for the education of children with disabilities in the IEP process. Similar sentiments were identified in the Special Education 2000 review in New Zealand that "Some parents talked about working in partnership with school, while others did not feel they were being treated as partners, or suggested they might be in danger of being left out of the loop" (Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 63). Nevertheless, Gargiulo (2003) asserted that in order to help children with disabilities in inclusive

schools, both parents and teachers must view themselves as equal partners working towards meeting the learning needs of the child with disabilities.

It is important to note that if the needs of the students with disabilities are not or cannot be met by the regular classroom programmes, consolidated actions and practices towards partnership or collaboration of parents and professionals like the teachers, specialists like psychologists, and therapists should be initiated (Connell, 2004). That means parents must develop a culture to value themselves as active members and realize that they have much to offer from their personal experiences with the child with disabilities (Flavell, 2001; Fraser, 2005). According to Idol (2002), the teachers' involvement with the children with disabilities must include being aware of the children's strengths and weaknesses and parents need to be informed so that they could in turn help the child while at home. This is because other studies have found that parental involvement at home appears to be more beneficial, particularly in regards to children's home work and academic progress for children with specific disabilities like attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) (Bennett, Deluca, & Bruns, 1997; Ree, 2001). As teachers are often responsible for the academic learning needs of the child at the classroom level, they can inform the parents how they could help their children while at home. However, Clough and Corbett (2000) and Meyer and Bevan-Brown (2005) whilst emphasizing the social model as opposed to the deficit and/or medical model for inclusion argued that teachers must have confidence, which should be reflected in their actions towards the parents' genuine involvement, and they must be comfortable with each other and communicate effectively in ways that will foster team effort and practice. In so doing, parents can be recognized as people who know more about the child, his/her strengths, setbacks, conditions and thus contribute towards the planning and implementation of relevant inclusive education programmes. This is supported by Moltzen (2005) that "…parents must be viewed as originators of the long-term IEP goals based on their experience, observation, and interaction with their children" (p. 157). However, Meyer and Bevan-Brown (2005) further argued that the collaborative effort must be based on mutual respect for each other's knowledge, contributions, and what they can and cannot do for the good of the child.

In their study, Bennett, Deluca and Bruns (1997) found that inclusion and parent involvement are considered best practice in early childhood education, but few empirical studies have focussed on the practical application of these concepts according to the teachers' views and perspectives. Bennett et al. (1997) used qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the perspectives of parents and of children with disabilities and teachers in inclusive settings regarding parents' involvement and their contribution towards successful inclusion. Most parents reported that they felt a high degree of involvement on the team, and teachers generally indicated positive attitudes towards the parents' involvement. Both parents and teachers acknowledged the need for a shared commitment among all involved parties. Parents also reported that positive practices and attitudes toward children with disabilities were essential for successful inclusion, whilst teachers focussed on the need for support and resources.

Classroom management. 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. 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. Apart from others, 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 et al. (2004) that "… classroom management is a systematic designing of the classroom environment to create conditions in which effective teaching and learning can occur" (p. 414). According to Idol (2002) and Mentis et al. (2005), this

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can be achieved through the application of appropriate behaviour management procedures, curriculum adaptation and the use of appropriate teaching strategies.

School curriculum. Westhood (2003) 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. According to Mentis et al. (2005) and Westhood (2003), differentiation refers to doing things differently to target the observed differences among learners' behaviour and learning patterns. They further recommended that the differentiated strategies can be used in areas such as the teaching approaches, curriculum content, assessment strategies and the general classroom organization. However, McNary et al. (2005) have established that teachers face unprecedented challenges in students' behavioural challenges in inclusive classrooms which can have negative repercussions on the learning outcomes of the children in inclusive classrooms. 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 behaviour patterns associated with hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Mitchell (1999) attested that among others the key tenets that teachers need to consider for inclusive curriculum would be issues such as the content being non-discriminatory, the strategies and organization must accommodate individual differences, and incorporate values and knowledge that is relevant to all children. However, Connell (2004) and Mitchell (1999) respectively argued that teachers must ensure the curriculum offered is age appropriate and functional and multi-level instructional strategies must also be sought, supported by appropriate teaching resources. More importantly, curriculum adaptation, supported by relevant teaching strategies is advocated in inclusive classrooms in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 1998; Mitchell, 1999). This is done for teachers to enhance learning opportunities for all children depending on their individual ability

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levels. The teacher therefore is assumed to play a pivotal role in fostering optimum learning outcomes for children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. According to the survey conducted by Taylor, Richards, Goldtsein and Schilit (1997), both special needs educators and regular education teachers agreed that certain changes have to be made in the curriculum offerings and the instructional methodology used for children with disabilities in the regular classroom. The survey however, showed disagreement between experienced teachers and trainee teachers about the education of children with disabilities in the regular classrooms. There was significant differences in the views of special needs educators and regular teachers about placement opportunities for children with mental disabilities and behavioural and emotional disabilities to be taught in the regular classrooms. The study further proposed that in order to achieve successful inclusion of children with disabilities into the regular classrooms, training in the areas of modifying the classroom structure, curriculum, and teaching methods should commence at the teacher training level.

In another study in teaching science instructions 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. Therefore, teachers' actions towards how they handle the teaching skills must be geared to develop the necessary skills in children. Teachers can also capitalise on the skills children with disabilities already have 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. 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 (Gurganus et al., 1995). 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.

Peer relationships. In order to foster the learning of children with disabilities, peer relationships must be regarded as an integral part of inclusive education practice (Smith, et al., 2004). In a recent study with particular focus on peer tutoring strategy in Aotearoa New Zealand, Stewart (2004) conducted an intervention study on reading comprehension, word recognition and additional curriculum based assessments involving paired students in an inclusive classroom context. Stewart (2004) identified that peer tutoring served two vital purposes. Firstly, it seeks to meet the learning needs of a diverse group of learners, particularly in inclusive settings. Secondly, peer tutoring promotes co-operative learning needs whereby students are seen to have exhibited genuine concern for the learning needs and progress of one another. According to Stewart, peer learning in this study demonstrated outcomes that supported the learning objectives of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework being fostered (Ministry of Education, 1993).   It is quite clear that peers can be a barrier for children with disabilities to be valued and given the educational opportunities that inclusive education system intends to promote. Connell (2004) and Mitchell (1999) respectively proposed that in such situations, teachers and other educational authorities would play a vital role by making other children known to the child with disabilities and making learning opportunities for all the children to work together. In so doing, children with disabilities can build a repertoire of skills in curriculum, social and behavioural skills necessary for advancement in the inclusive education system

Assessment practices. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process in inclusive schools and classrooms (Smith et al., 2004, 1998). Assessment refers to collecting and analysing information related to students' learning to make instructional, administrative and guidance decisions (Smith et al., 1998). According to Peterson and Hittie (2003), the kind of assessment practices used in inclusive classrooms must align with the teaching instructions used. That means "assessment becomes embedded in classroom instruction" (Peterson & Hittie, 2003, p. 240). Peterson, LeRoy, Field and Wood (1992) stated that recent assessment practices attempt to deviate from the traditional, exclusively measuring abstract responses and learning. They further stated that recent practices in assessment endeavour to incorporate functional and applied

vocation and life skills in line with the curriculum innovation and changes. In New Zealand for example, assessment practices have moved away from the assessing, planning and resourcing approach to one that looks into individual child's learning needs (Mitchell, 1999). Mitchell stated that this approach is an attempt to move away from the traditional standardised tests to more ecological assessment where the needs of all learners are assessed based on what they can achieve individually. Mitchell further argues that while standardised tests are not completely rejected, they can be used with other assessment approaches to acquire a wider picture of a child's learning needs. However, in inclusive schools where children with disabilities who exhibit varied learning needs are taught, assessment should be undertaken by people who are closely associated with the child on day-to-day basis in the learning context (Clough & Corbett, 2002; Mitchell, 1999).

Education assessment practices are increasingly using the ecological assessment model in inclusive classrooms (More et al., 1999). According to Smith et al. (1998), through the application of an ecological assessment, emphasis is placed on the child's interaction with the surrounding environment in the form of human, physical and social aspects. "Its [ecological assessment] central element is *functionality* – how well the student functions in the current environment or the one he or she will be moving" (Smith et al., 1998, pp. 70-71) [original emphasis]. From an ecological perspective, a study by MacArthur, Kelly and Higgins (2005) on the identified outcomes that resulted from students' interaction and their school experience shows that there were significant positive relationships between desired programmes implemented and the outcomes achieved. They therefore pointed out that the students' learning contexts must be critically examined as ecological assessment is about examining the child as an individual developing and interacting with the environmental influences.

2.5 Inclusive Education Policies in Papua New Guinea

Special and inclusive education in Papua New Guinea has progressed slowly since independence in 1975 (Mapsea, 2006). While special and inclusive education have

reached momentum in the recent years (Frost, 2002), this is mainly due to the 'rights' movement advocated in the world through major organisations like the UNESCO, UNICEF and UN (Department of Education, 2002a). The National Constitution of Papua New Guinea also advocates the rights of all children towards basic education, health and other social and welfare support services provided by the government (Department of Education, 2004a&c). According to Matane (1989), two of the five national goals and directive principles of the constitution advocate 'integral human development' and 'equality and participation'. Matane and his committee strongly believed that these two principles do act as the cornerstone where all people including those with disabilities should be regarded as human beings, and thus provide opportunities for them to equally participate in all forms of societal activities and development. Hence, the constitutional development committee advocated socialisation, participation, liberation and equality which underpin all children's education and progress. These principles are enshrined in the Papua New Guinea National Constitution and children with disabilities are part of these basic principles. The recently developed education policies also support inclusion and participation of children with disabilities in Papua New Guinea (Department of Education, 2002a&b; 2004a).

Universal Primary Education (UPE) in PNG. While there are eight major goals advocated by the United Nations of which Papua New Guinea is a member, the one that is applicable for children with disabilities is "Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education" (Department of Education, 2004a, p. 5). According to Webster (2000), "Universal Primary Education in the literal sense would mean everyone in a population having a full primary school education" (p. 29). According to Webster, Universal Primary Education (UPE) was a high priority in Papua New Guinea even before independence in 1975. This was reflected in the establishment of many primary and secondary schools in the hope of giving educational opportunities to as many children as possible (Pau, 1993; Waiko, 1997; Webster, 2000). The Department of Education (2002a) states that there are three primary components of UPE in Papua New Guinea which include:

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- that all children should enter grade 1 at the age of seven years,
- that all children complete the primary cycle of education, and
- that all children reach a required standard of literacy and numeracy at the end of this primary cycle of education. (p. 13)

The achievement of Universal Primary Education in Papua New Guinea is, however, hampered by many factors. According to Webster (2000) and Department of Education (2002a), some of these factors include: remoteness of the schools, access where most schools are far from the villages, teacher shortage, and classroom space. Webster (2005) further states that school fees are a major problem where many parents cannot afford to pay for their children's school fees due to rising school fees and poverty. However, to combat this problem, many governments in PNG have embarked on 'free education policy', but it often becomes political rhetoric and a point scoring avenue (Ivarature, 1995). According to the Department of Education (2004a), UPE in Papua New Guinea is observed and implemented under the 'Education for All' framework signed by all nations in the world in Jomtien, Thailand. Among the six goals espoused, three are applicable for the education of children with disabilities and these include:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- Ensuring that by 2015 all children have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- The learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to the appropriate learning and life skills programmes. (Department of Education, 2004a, p. 5)

However, according to Webster (2000) and from personal experiences of the researcher as a teacher educator in PNG, it is seen that the effective implementation of these goals has encountered many challenges in regard to the policy developers as well as implementers. The Department of Education (2002a) also acknowledges that whilst there are many unprecedented challenges in implementing the goals espoused in the 'Education for All' framework, progress towards implementing and achieving the goals is gaining momentum.

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Papua New Guinea Special Education Policies. Special and inclusive education provisions have been delivered in PNG on an ad-hoc basis since independence (Department of Education, 2002a; Mapsea, 2006). It was not formally known until the formulation of the 'National Special Education Plan and Policy Guidelines' in 1993 (Department of Education, 1993). This was a major policy shift where the education system was required to make changes to accommodate all children with disabilities in the regular classroom. This policy advocated teacher training through in-service and pre-service provisions, amalgamation of special education institutions with the existing regular school system, relevant curriculum development, and making appropriate changes to the school environment. A Department of Education circular was delivered by the then Secretary for Education instructing all heads of member institutions in PNG on the changes clearly outlining the new special education policy framework (Tetaga, 1994). In this circular, the roles of the school administrators and provincial education officials were clearly spelled out and they were informed to disseminate the information based on the special education policy to teachers, parents and children. One of the requirements of the circular was for school administrators and provincial education authorities to develop school based in-service training programmes as part of staff development programmes to effectively implement the special education policy.

The 'National Special Education Policy and Plan' was then evaluated and re-drafted in 2003 for implementation from 2004 – 2013. However, the policy was reduced in size and content from the initial document for reasons only known to the policy developers. In support of this situation, Rombo (2006) argued that "the special education policy for PNG was recently revised to include issues such as teacher preparation, identification and screening, and curriculum and instructional strategies … though it appears to be limited in its scope and content" (p. 30). According to the Department of Education (2002a), the main aim of the special education policy was to achieve the UPE in Papua New Guinea through the recognition of individual human rights.

The PNG National Education Plan for 2005 – 2014. This is the most recent and up to date education plan for PNG to be achieved within the next 10 year period focussing on

primary; high school; secondary; flexible, open and distance education; vocational education; and technical education and training. The main thrust of the education plan aims to provide education for all citizens and thus:

> Our vision is integral human development [refer to 1.2.1] achieved through an affordable education system that appreciates Christian and traditional values, and that prepares literate, skilled and healthy citizens by concentrating on the growth and development of each individual's personal viability and character formation, while ensuring all can contribute to the peace and prosperity of the nation. (Department of Education, 2004a, p. 17)

Within the national education plan, the education of children with disabilities is also considered. This is reflected in the major outcome for the primary education sector in the education plan where it is stated that; "All children have the opportunity to complete a full, quality primary education of six years to grade 8" (Department of Education, 2004a, p. 51). While the education provision for children with disabilities is provided, the plan also proposes that Special Education Resource Centres, which are in fact institutions for children with disabilities, should still accommodate the needs of those children whose learning needs cannot be accommodated within the regular education system.

Papua New Guinea National Curriculum Statement. The curriculum statement is an important curriculum document for the primary, high school and secondary education sectors in the Papua New Guinea education system. However, it is worth noting that the vocational and technical education sectors have their own curriculum statement. According to the Department of Education (2002a), "It asserts what is educationally valuable for all students from Elementary Prep to Grade 12 in the national education school system of Papua New Guinea" (p. 1). The curriculum statement is an outcomes-based education where emphasis is placed on specific outcomes to be achieved or demonstrated at a particular grade in each subject area. The outcomes are accompanied by list of indicators that identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which the students must demonstrate in each subject area in a given grade (Department of Education, 2004b). According to the Department of Education (2002a), the curriculum values are based on the basic principles espoused in the National Constitution and the

Philosophy of Education. These principles include: integral human development, equality and participation, national sovereignty and self-reliance, natural resources and environment, Papua New Guinea ways, rights, and responsibilities. These principles act as core values for the education of all children in Papua New Guinea, both in their academic courier pathway as well as their basic life skills (Department of Education, 2004b).

2.6 Summary of the Chapter

The literature review comprised five main sections. These include scene for inclusive education, school culture and inclusive practices, issues pertaining to inclusive legislation and policies that underpin inclusion, factors and practices that influence inclusive practices, and inclusive education policies in PNG. According to the literature, inclusive education and school culture have been defined and interpreted by various commentators differently because these issues are complex in theory and practice. Inclusive education has been influenced by history, time and place together with the disability discourses. The literature further suggests that different school and teacher related practices such as policies, curriculum, assessment, knowledge and experiences combine to influence inclusive practices. In PNG inclusive education is supported by the United Nations and the associated policy frameworks where education for all is recognized by the philosophy of education and the national constitution. Given a detailed description of what the literature states about school cultural features and practices and inclusion, the study attempted to achieve one primary aim. It was to identify the school cultural features and practices that influenced or did not influence inclusive education and the impact on the teachers, school administrators and the school/classroom practices towards inclusion in four schools in Southern Highlands Province. Having in mind the research aim, the next chapter shall talk about the theoretical framework and research methodology used as a lens to meet the aim of the study and the major four research questions.

CHAPTER THREE:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter the theoretical framework and research methodology used for this study are described. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is about Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979; 1989; 1993). The major tenets which underpin this theory are explained to illustrate how the theoretical framework supported the study. The second section of the chapter discusses the research methodology that was used for the study. Within this section, the interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm, and specifically the application of the qualitative research approach is presented. An ethnographic case study approach used in this study also is explained. This is followed by an explanation of data collection using semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. The research participant selection, description of the schools, the research plan and data analysis procedures used for this study are presented. The chapter concludes with a description of the validity, reliability, and ethical considerations for this study.

3.1 Theoretical Framework for the Study

An ecological systems theory. The theoretical framework that supported this study is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989, 1993). In defining his theory, Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that:

> The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing

person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. (p. 21)

Viewing the theory from a development psychological perspective, a child's development is influenced by the surrounding environment and social context. The theory emphasises that human behaviour emanates from the function of the human person and the environment in which the person exists (Damon & Lerner, 2006 & 1997). For instance, the way children with disabilities are viewed, treated and included in the learning process in regular school contexts would play a major part in their learning achievements. Bronfenbrenner points out that the vital component of this theory is the degree of interaction that is evident within a layer-like structure (Ceci, Baker-Sennett & Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The interactions can be bidirectional or multidirectional in that the individual person and the context may influence each other. From an ecological systems perspective, the environment is viewed as a configuration of structures from a child's evolving stages to maturity. Thomas (2005) noted that the ecological structures or layers are organised hierarchically with increasing complexity as the child develops and moves from the immediate context like a family home or school to the wider society. Each of these structures imposes their own degree of interaction and each one is relatively dependent upon the previous state of functioning of the individual in the social context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989, 1993; Thomas, 2005).

Bronfenbrenner conceptualised the ecological systems theory as having a number of successive layers that influence a developing person. These nested structures or successive layers are called the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. This theoretical conceptualisation has recently been viewed as useful in fostering inclusive practices for a developing child/ren with disabilities (Guralnick, 1982; Peck, 1993). In the current study, the context is referred to as the school culture which is part of the microsystem and all children in the school including those with disabilities are perceived to be inseparable from this context. This is because in many ways 'the way things are done' at the microsystem, which is the 'school culture', especially in a regular school context influences how children are viewed and included alongside others.

Hence, Bronfenbrenner proposed that human development is influenced by factors operating at different 'systems levels' within a broad ecological structure. These different levels exert reciprocal influences on one another (Baltes, Lindenberger & Staudinger, 2006; Magnusson & Stattin, 2006). For instance, negative attitudes exhibited by teachers towards children with disabilities can have repercussions for inclusion in regular schools. On the other hand, the child's state of condition can also influence the kind of perceptions held by teachers. Other research has also identified the reciprocal effects of children and the environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Hence, the application of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory for inclusion as used in this study is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.
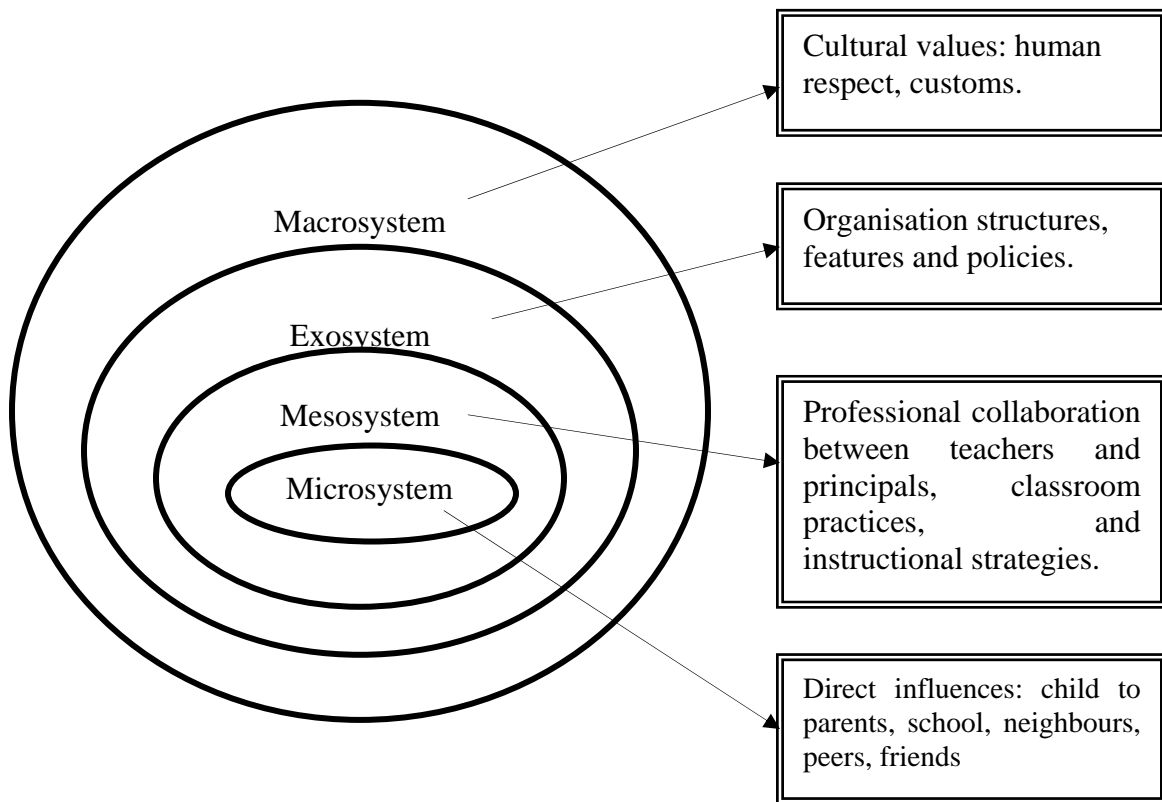
Figure 3. 1: Ecological systems theory (adapted from Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 866).

The first systems level called the 'microsystem' contains the factors within a child's immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1975, 1989, 1993). This is an innermost level and is viewed as the context in which a child interacts with the immediate environment such as a home, school, and peer group which ultimately fosters human development. At the microsystem level, an analysis of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory shows activities, roles, and interrelationships as three fundamental factors that promote a child's development at the immediate context (Thomas, 2005). He defines these factors in the following way:

> The term *activities* refer to what people are doing. *Roles* are the actions expected of people holding a position in society, such as positions of parent, infant, sibling, teacher, friend, coach, or the like. *Interpersonal* relations are the ways people treat one another, as shown by what they say and do as a result of them being together. (Thomas, 2005, p. 351)[original emphasis]

In comparing the ecological approach to visual perception and the ecology of human development, some developmental psychologists consider that the above factors directly affect the child and in turn may be affected by the child (Tudge, Gray & Hogan, 1997). There has been considerable research on inclusion which has been devoted to identifying effects of inclusion on the behavior or development of children with disabilities, with results being attributed to practices that occur within inclusive programmes and contexts (Buysse & Bailey, 1993). The positive contributions of school-aged children with disabilities in inclusive school contexts and programmes that led to establishing positive ripple effects on other children during learning in school settings also were identified (Peck et al., 1992). That means Bronfenbrenner's conceptualization of the microsystem also underpins individualization of context-based instructions and practices like curriculum differentiation. This is to meet an individual's specific needs and social relationships with peers and capable adults: "In effect, how the child grows up is also strongly affected by what is said or done to the child – or in the child's presence – by parents, siblings, other relatives, teachers, coaches, club leaders, and the like" (Thomas, 2005, p. 352). These are viewed as practices that support inclusion.

The mesosystem encompasses the interrelations of two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates; for example, for a child the relations between

home, school, neighborhood and peer groups (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Winton (1993), family members' beliefs about inclusion and the family's relationships with school contexts may affect the inclusion process. Similarly, how children with disabilities relate to their peers in the classroom setting may affect relationships outside the classroom situation (Kugelmass, 2004; Villa & Thousand, 2005). For example, in inclusive settings negative attitudes exhibited in the classroom situation during learning can affect social relations like playing games outside the classroom. How professionals who serve young children with disabilities work with and feel about each other is also a part of the mesosystem (Peck et al, 1989).

The exosystem level does not involve the developing person as an active participant, but is a structure in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what is happening in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The service delivery agency responsible for an inclusion programme may be considered as an example of an exosystem setting. In this regard, how the agency is organized can affect inclusive education programme implementation. For instance, the Callan Services Resource Center in Mendi in SHP that existed during the time of the current study plays a vital role in fostering inclusive practices. This is illustrated by a study over a five year period that programmes which appeared to sustain inclusion were implemented and the results show organizational structural changes. In so doing, the process of inclusion was sustained by the school culture (Peck, Mabry, Curley, & Conn-Powers, 1994). The linkages and the interrelationships that exist at the exosystem level can influence effective inclusive practices. Also the degree of interaction at the exosystem level with people responsible for inclusive programmes and policies may have an impact on the other organizational levels (Pecks et al., 1989). These could be considered as the school's features and practices which can affect the learning experiences of children with disabilities in inclusive school contexts.

The macrosystem is considered as the wider atmosphere of the school culture in which the other ecological systems (microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem) are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 2005; Tudge, Gray & Hogan, 1997).

Bronfenbrenner stated that the macrosystem is referred to as wider cultural milieu from which the different ecological systems, practices, and cultures exist. It also consists of "… the array of attitudes, practices, and convictions shared throughout society at large" (Thomas, 2005, p. 355). At the macrosystem level, within the wider school culture, other sub-cultures such as the students, teachers, parents, and boards of trustees also exist and influence each other through the decisions they make; their individual and collective actions and practices (Prosser & Warburton, 1999). When looking at the features and practices of the social milieu they may appear to be the same but they require specific approaches and strategies to meet needs of individuals in the different levels of the ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989, 1993). For instance, children with disabilities are generally viewed from the 'deficiency' lens. This lens is characterized by the shortcomings and difficulties that are associated with children with disabilities which require adjustment to the programmes and contexts in the learning process in regular schools. However, the way such children are included within the regular education culture may differ from one culture or sub-culture to another (Mitchell, 2005; Villa & Thousand, 2005). Nevertheless, special and inclusive education are viewed to be a philosophy or practice towards giving equal and greater value to those with disabilities in the wider society and/or macrosystem.

A critical element of research methodology in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is ecological validity (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). This refers to the extent to which the assumed features and characteristics of a phenomenon are present in the results of a study. According to Thomas (2005), studies that are done on children in institutions like laboratories and unique contexts intend to generalize their findings and results. This kind of research methodology overlooks the children's interpretations and the influences exerted by the different configurations of the environment, which include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The school culture is a typical phenomenon embedded within the microsystem and how a developing child interacts within this system needs to be taken as a whole and studied (Prosser, 1999). This is supported by Henstrand (2006) who states that "To fully comprehend the culture of the school, the whole must be understood in terms of the parts just as the parts must be

understood in terms of the whole" (p. 6). Therefore, it was considered that the investigation of the influences exerted by the parts or whole of the school culture as the social milieu on a developing child could be done through an interpretative/naturalistic lens. An analytical and interpretive framework as such allows an investigator to unveil what is going on in the social settings under study by interpreting the phenomenon whilst in the natural setting (Anfara & Mertz, 2006).

3.2 Research Methodology and Process

In view of the research objectives, questions and the theoretical framework that were used for the study, the interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm was deemed the most appropriate lens through which this study should be viewed and conducted. The ethnographic case study methodology, which falls under the qualitative research approach was used in order to study the four schools as situated cultural contexts.   The study was descriptive where explanatory codes, categories and themes that emerged from the data were used to explain the professional staff members' views and perspectives on which school cultural features and practices influenced inclusive education in the four schools in the Southern Highlands Province (SHP). The research paradigm and process are discussed below to show how they were used in the study.

3.2.1 Interpretive/Naturalistic Research Paradigm

The first aim of the study was to identify the school cultural features and practices that influenced inclusive education in four schools in the SHP in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The second aim was to ascertain the kinds of inclusive practices influenced by the above school cultural features and practices. In view of the research aims, the understanding of teachers and school administrators whilst in their natural settings and how they viewed the inclusion of children with disabilities was considered important. That means the research was an interpretive/naturalistic study whereby what was happening in the four schools in terms of the inclusion of children with disabilities was investigated in its natural setting. Hence, the use of interpretative/naturalistic research paradigm was deemed appropriate. The rationale behind using the interpretive/naturalistic paradigm was

that it has been considered as a broader terminology and lens through which one could unveil the social phenomenon for investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). From an epistemological view, interpretive/naturalistic inquiry is more subjective and is based on hunches and insights, which are uniquely and personally created from human intuitions and experiences (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), research paradigms are referred to as lenses through which one could view and unveil the social world. Therefore, unlike other research paradigms, like the positivist-empirical research and critical theory research, the interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm is an established way of unveiling the social world (Cohen et al., 2000; Gephart, 1999; Popokewitz, 1984). It is evident that these research paradigms can be viewed differently in terms of their assumptions, values and interests (Cohen et al., 2000; Popkewitz, 1984). According to Gaphart (1999), the interpretive research paradigm is quite recent and hence there is confusion as to how one interprets the social contexts. He further says that through the use of the interpretive paradigm, one is concerned with the "abstract descriptions of meanings and members' definitions of situations produced in natural contexts" (Gaphart, 1999, p.3). The researcher in the current study therefore resorted to the use of interpretive/naturalistic paradigm in order to study the wider school culture and its influences on inclusion. At the same time, the qualitative research approach is recognised under this wider paradigm (Cohen et al., 2000). This is because it was viewed that the professional staff, whilst in their natural settings such as their classrooms and school contexts would provide invaluable information based on their lived experiences concerning the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular schools in the Southern Highlands Province.

The interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm is concerned with how individuals make meanings out of their social situations and milieu (Bouma, 1996; Gephart, 1999). For instance, for the current study it was assumed that teachers and school administrators would be able to provide useful information regarding their experiences on how they have included children with disabilities in their classrooms and schools and how they have tried to help them in the learning process. That means through the use of the interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm, meanings and experiences could be

constructed by individuals making meanings out of their lived experiences and actions, which are exhibited in their natural social contexts (Creswell, 2005; Harker, 1999). According to Cohen et al. (2000) and Merriam (1988), their lived experiences are achieved through their interaction with other people like teachers, school administrators, parents, peers, and their active involvement with the surrounding ecological system which include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. The ecological paradigm locates the education achievement of children with disabilities within the interaction of teachers and students in given contexts (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). That means in order to understand the development and learning of children with disabilities, one has to consider how the immediate environment or microsystem influences the learning processes. This was considered to be understood by using the interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm and specifically the qualitative research approach. How the qualitative research was used in the current study warrants further explanation.

3.2.2 Qualitative Research Approach

The qualitative research approach falls within the interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm (Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2005). Positivistic approaches were once unquestioned and traditionally used (Cohen et al., 2000; Popkewitz, 1984). However, qualitative researchers believe that social reality is inherently associated with human beings and their social contexts (Burns, 2000). Therefore, human knowledge is deeply rooted in human actions rather than being generated through statistical manipulation and quantifiable research approaches which objective science relies on (Cohen et al., 2000). This is not to diminish positivism, but a qualitative researcher places his/her validity by studying more than one social context and thus makes meanings through holistic analysis of a social phenomenon (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 1994). For instance, in the current study the researcher attempted to grasp an authentic understanding and world view of the school cultural features and practices that were assumed to have influenced the inclusion of children with disabilities in four regular schools in SHP. This was done by way of gauging the school professionals' views and experiences from semi-

structured interviews and through the researcher's site involvement with the research participants in non-participant observations in the schools under study.

However, the qualitative research approach and results have been questioned, based on issues of validity and reliability (Cohen et al., 2000). Qualitative researchers insist that knowledge can be generated through the use of different assumptions, methodologies and appeals to different forms of understanding (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2005). That means by being engaged in the four schools in Southern Highlands Province in PNG, the researcher sought to identify the most salient features of situations and meanings that emerged from the inclusive education process and thus, discover a holistic world view of the phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2000). The end result is this has led to making meanings, explanations and interpretations of events which could have been quite different from relying on predictions and inferences alone, or through other quantifiable means.

The qualitative researcher in this study often tried to 'dig deeper' into the school professionals' human intuitions to interpret the complexities of the social world, and to access the worldview of the people researched (Bouma, 1996 & 1993; Burns, 2000). This means that the researcher understood that he was not detached from the social reality and contexts under inquiry, but rather became engrossed in the entire research process to give a particular and focused attention to the multiple realities and the socially constructed meanings in the four schools under study as useful social contexts (Cohen et al., 2000; Burns, 2000). This approach is supported by Creswell (1994) and Merriam (1988) who emphasize the basic characteristics of qualitative research. The study was also descriptive and inductive in nature. According to Merriam (1988), being inductive means the researcher was interested in building meanings, descriptions, concepts, and themes from details that were provided by the research participants. Due to the use and application of a qualitative research approach, the researcher in the current study considered that every social reality was associated with the explanations and interpretations of the people researched. This led to making meanings that were generated in line with the research topic, purpose, and the major research questions that guided this study.

3.2.3 Case Study Research Methodology

A researcher who is engaged in the interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm would typically employ a variety of qualitative-oriented research methodologies (Creswell, 2005). The qualitative researcher resorts to one of four main research methodologies found in social science research (Creswell, 1994). The research methodologies are case studies, ethnographic research, phenomenological research, and grounded theory research. All of these research methodologies fall within the framework of the qualitative research approach (Creswell, 1994, 2002, 2005). However, for the purposes of the current study, the case study methodology and some elements of the ethnographic research were used as these were deemed to be appropriate. The case study has been defined as an in-depth investigation of "… a program, an event, an activity, a process, of one or more individuals" (Creswell, 2002, p.15). It is also the study of a single instance of a "bounded system" of a social phenomenon (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). Bounded means the case is confined by time, activity and place in which the intended study is executed (Creswell, 2002). According to Harker (1999) and Yin (1994), there is confusion as to how one defines case study because it was traditionally rejected, or not regarded as a rigorous or 'scientific' research methodology. On the other hand, ethnographic studies attempt to understand a phenomenon from a naturalistic social context (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Cohen et al., 2000). These authors further explain that in ethnographic studies, the data collected is 'context bounded' and thick descriptions in social settings are gathered. For instance, the current study was bounded in the sense that only one province in PNG was taken as a case and only teachers and school administrators with primary school background were involved in the study as research participants. The data was collected through the use of interviews and observations, which are data collection methods used in both case study and ethnographic research.

Two definitions of case study as a research methodology which have been accepted in research circles as a way of unveiling interpretive social phenomenon are identified in the literature (Yin, 1994). The first technical definition provided maintains that the case study is a systematic type of inquiry which endeavours to investigate a contemporary

phenomenon in social settings, and in real life-situations (Cohen et al., 2000). For instance, the notion of inclusive education is relatively new to the teachers, the school administrators, and the general education system in PNG. Hence, it was necessary to understand how children with disabilities were educated in inclusive classrooms in the four schools under study. This was done by gauging the views and perceptions of the classroom teachers and the school administrators about the school cultural features and practices that were assumed to have influenced inclusive education in the four school contexts in SHP. However, according to Stake (1995) and Yin (1994), the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are often not clearly defined as there are many complexities involved.

The second technical definition notes that the case study uses multiple sources of data collection. These include observations, interviews, documents in the form of archives, records, and policies in order to examine previously developed theoretical propositions (Cohen et al, 2000) or to develop new theories and propositions (Straus & Corbin, 1997; Straus & Glaser, 1967) about a phenomenon within a social setting. Data collection and analysis procedures are guided by the specific research question(s), context(s) and previous findings and explanations (Bouma, 1996; Yin, 1994). In general, case study researchers tend to use an interpretive research paradigm to inform their approach to the knowledge about social reality (Cohen et al., 2000). Harker (1999, 1998) maintains that the case study is therefore a research methodology rather than being simply regarded as a method of obtaining data. The basic difference is that research methodology encompasses all the processes of the research endeavour underpinned by the theoretical basis, whilst methods refer only to data collection and analysis procedures (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Therefore, Cohen et al. (2000) stated that the use and application of the case study as a legitimate research methodology in its own right is acceptable. This assertion is supported by Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) who respectively argued that case studies should not be regarded as a mere data collection technique or a design feature, but a comprehensive research methodology which can be used to unveil a social problem/issue.

In general, the characteristics of the case study can be summarised as research that focuses on first-hand, in-depth and rich information, for example, about the school cultural features and practices that have influenced inclusive education as a single social reality under study (Bouma, 1996; Harker, 1999; Yin, 1994). Some of the basic characteristics of case study that are applicable in the current study include: studying a single and/or bounded phenomenon or system in depth (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1988), and a group composed of similar characteristics and socio-cultural traits are the focus (Bouma, 1996; Merriam, 1988). Case studies also use a variety of data collection methods (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1988), and multiple sources of evidence, each with its own wealth of strengths and weaknesses (Gillham, 2000). These characteristics appear to be the vital qualities of the case study, and these were taken into account in the current study.

Due to the nature of the context for the current case study, the researcher did not consider one technique of data collection such as semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations to be better than the other, but rather both methods were assumed to yield relevant and useful information. At the same time, Bouma (1996) suggests that two or three sources of data should be used, such as the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations used in this study. This is called methodological triangulation (Bouma, 1996; Cohen et al., 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Creswell, 1994). In the process, the data collected becomes more concrete and authentic, and the truthfulness of the data collected is enhanced.

While there are three basic types of case study research, the one of most relevance to this research is the collective case study (Stake, 1995) or explanatory case study (Yin, 1994). In this type of case study, rather than studying a person or unit, similar things such as schools, contexts or people are studied to identify how representative the case is with similar cases, situations, and contexts (Stake, 1995). For instance, in the current case study, the researcher attempted to study what was happening in four selected schools in terms of the inclusion of children with disabilities. There were two reasons for the use of the collective case study research approach (Stake, 1995). Firstly, was to identify and

explain the school cultural features and practices that influenced the inclusion of children with disabilities in the four schools and to identify similarities and differences among the schools. The main characteristic of an explanatory case study is to identify what is happening in a specific social context like the four selected schools in SHP and thus develop propositions for further inquiry (Straus & Glaser, 1967; Yin, 1994). Secondly, while studying the phenomenon, the researcher could also examine other related variables, such as the kind of inclusive education practices influenced by the identified school cultural features and practices in the four schools under study.

The rationale behind the use of a case study research approach is that it would hopefully produce findings and results accessible to the people researched, which would lead to ethical accountability (Harker, 1998, 1999). This is one of the major strengths of the current case study as the research participants were classroom teachers and school administrators with little understanding of research. That means the research findings should be more easily read and understood as the study report is descriptive in nature. Furthermore, the use of case study research methodology in this study allowed the researcher to establish a positive rapport and relationships with the research participants through personal interactions. In so doing, first-hand information was acquired about the school cultural features and practices that influence inclusive education in the four schools under study. Through the use of the semi-structured interview and non-participant observation, the researcher would be able to find out what the school professionals revealed in terms of their personal and professional experiences with children having disabilities.

3.2.4 Data Collection Methods used for the Study

Semi-structured interview. There are three main approaches to interview research (Bouma, 1996; Merriam, 1988). First is a structured interview and in this type of study the researcher decides in advance what information needs to be collected. Subsequently, a structured interview schedule is drawn up which consists of relevant questions asked of the respondents. The respondents then answer the questions according to the interview

schedule prepared, and this kind of interview is quite rigid in nature (Bell, 1993; Bouma, 1996; Harker, 1999, 1998). Second is a semi-structured interview where the researcher goes to the field with some questions in mind, but there is flexibility for the researcher to make alterations where needs arise, and when circumstances change during the course of the interview (Bell, 1993; Harker, 1999, 1998; Merriam, 1988). Finally is the unstructured interview, and here the researcher goes to the field without any preconceived interview schedules or questions. The researcher interprets the social setting and the phenomenon under investigation whilst in the field. Unwanted information is discarded whilst information pertaining to the phenomenon under inquiry are considered, and collected (Harker, 1999).

For the purpose of the current study, the researcher used the semi-structured interview as the first data collection method for two reasons (see Appendix C & D). Firstly, it was considered that in this approach the participants could freely express themselves and where needed the research participants would be probed with further questions to gauge their lived experiences and perspectives about the school cultural features and practices that influence inclusive education. According to Creswell (2005), "Probes are sub-questions under each question that the researcher asks to elicit more information. Use them to clarify points or to have the interviewee expand on ideas" (p. 218) (see Appendix E). Secondly, the semi-structured interview was used because the researcher saw that because of their cultural perspectives, the participants would give direct and specific answers when the researcher interacted with them face-to-face. Thirdly, the researcher knew the research topic and thus the semi-structured interview was used to let the participants' ideas become evident. This was the most appropriate way to collect the required data in the four schools because from the researcher's cultural experiences, people express themselves more freely in direct conversations.

Non-participant observations. This is the second data collection method used for this study. The researcher in this study was aware of the existence of two kinds of observational research techniques. Firstly, there is participant or systematically-structured ethnographic observation (Bell, 1993; Harker, 1998, 1999). Secondly, there is

non-participant, less structured observational research (Bouma, 1996; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Harker, 1998, 1999). Participant observation has some advantages compared with other observation procedures; it is carefully defined and highly explicit, so it is absolutely clear as to how the descriptions were reached. However, using pre-planned observational instruments to collect data, some aspects of the phenomenon under study could be missed, and these might be of crucial importance to the study (Creswell, 2002, 2005; Harker, 1999).

In the current study on the school cultural features and practices that influenced inclusive education in the four selected schools, non-participant observation research was preferred over participant observation (see Appendix F). There were two reasons for choosing this data collection method. Firstly, the researcher was interested in observing what was going on in the classrooms in the real life situation whilst the teachers were in action (Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2005). Secondly, taking an active part in the programmes and daily activities of the teachers and school administrators was considered to be inappropriate, since it might distort the collection of authentic data (Bouma, 1996; Cohen et al., 2000). This was considered a possibility because the staff members might see the researcher as an outsider, and thus might assume that his presence was intrusive to their usual activities (Creswell, 2005). However, this was avoided by making verbal agreement with the teachers who were to take part in the observations. Through the application of non-participant observation, the researcher is able to collect in-depth and authentic data in a non-obtrusive manner whilst the participants are in their natural settings (Merriam, 1988).

3.2.5 Method of Research Participant Selection

Participant Selection. Sampling is an important issue that was considered in this study. However, due to the qualitative nature of the study, specifically the case study research methodology, the use of the homogenous sampling was deemed most appropriate. According to Creswell (2005), in order to use the homogeneous sampling procedure, research participants or the research sites have to possess similar traits and characteristics

that are inherent within all members and sites. Therefore, 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. Firstly, the study involved primary school trained teachers and school administrators who were assumed to have taught or were teaching during the time of the study. Secondly, during the time of the study, all the school professionals were implementing the outcome-based education curriculum which attempted to deviate from the objective and/or behaviorist approach curriculum towards the ecological based teaching and assessment. Thirdly, at least most of the school staff either had been teaching in SHP for several years or they originally come from the province. Hence, they were more knowledgeable of the research contexts and the children who come from the surrounding communities.

In terms of the research context, firstly, all the schools were primary schools, and all were 'top-up schools' from grade three to eight. A 'top-up school' is a primary school in the current education reform structure where grade seven and eight classes are included which were part of the high schools in the previous education structure (see PNG Education Reform Structure: Appendix M). Secondly, all the schools were located in one province in PNG. Thirdly, all the schools had a principal and two deputy principals; one called the deputy principal-academic, and the other the deputy principal-administration. The use of the homogeneous sampling procedure was therefore valuable, based on these shared characteristics, both in regards to the research participants and the study contexts.

Research Participants. A total of 19 research participants took part in the study. The initial intention was to have five research participants in each of the four schools. The rationale for this decision was to gauge equal number of participants' views and perspectives in each school to identify similarities and differences. The composition of the research participants was that in each of the four schools, three classroom teachers and two school administrators were selected. However, in Urban-1 the deputy principal was also teaching in the classroom due to a shortage of teachers. Therefore, only 19 participants took part in the study. The criteria used to select the research participants was that both experienced and graduate teachers had to take part in the study. A

judgment was made that experienced teachers must have been teaching consistently for more than five years whilst the graduate teachers were inexperienced in teaching and they came directly from the college, and were on probation yet to be registered as teachers. In PNG, graduate teachers from the college are given one year provisional registration. Then the graduate teacher is inspected by a school inspector three different times in the first year and when all teaching requirements are met he/she is accorded registered teacher status.

It is important to take note that two categories of names are used to denote the research participants who took part in the study. Firstly, names such as research participants, participants, respondents, professional staff members, and staff members are used to denote both teachers and school administrators collectively for general representation. This means these names are used when the data or information refers to them generally. Secondly, names like teachers, experienced teachers, graduates, and school administrators are specifically used to refer to them as individuals. This means the two category of names represent voices, actions, practices and interpretations of the teachers and school administrators as individuals as well as collectively. The demographic information on table 1 on the following page represents the schools, teachers and school administrators who took part in the study.

Table 3.1: Demographic information for the study (see Appendix A).

School Code	Teachers	School Administrators
Urban-1	2	2
Urban-2	3	2
Rural-1	3	2
Rural-2	3	2
SUB-TOTAL	**11**	**8**
TOTAL	**19**	

3.2.6 Selection and Description of the School Contexts

The field work was conducted in four primary schools which were categorised into rural and urban settings in Southern Highlands Province in PNG. The rationale for analysing the data using remote and urban settings was to illuminate some specific environmental features and practices. It was also to identify context bound, individual, unique features and characteristics of the four schools in reference to the school cultural features and practices that have influenced inclusive education. A within-case and cross-case analysis was also sought to identify similarities and differences of how the school cultural features and practices influenced inclusive education in the case study. However, the data collection was guided by some preempted themes drawn from the literature and the researcher's personal experiences as a teacher educator in special education in PNG.

For the purposes of maintaining authenticity and to validate the data, both interview and observation data collected in the four schools were merged and used together according to the categories, major themes, and sub-themes that emerged from the colour coding and thematic analysis process. This was to build a wider picture of what was actually going on in terms of the school cultural features and practices that influence inclusive education in the four school contexts. While the interview transcripts were within the range of 100 to 120 pages and were quite cumbersome for analysis, the observation transcripts provided 14 pages, as only a selected number of research participants took part in this particular data collection method. The data analysis therefore is based on data collected from the two methods. It is important to note that based on the recent education reforms in PNG, all the four schools under study were 'top-up primary schools' with grades three to eight.

Urban-1 is one of many church agency schools located in an urban setting and is one of the biggest primary schools in SHP. The church in this study is a main line church that is common in PNG. Main churches are Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, or Seventh-day Adventist. For this study, only the first two church agency schools took part due to easy access in Southern Highlands Province. The school has a student enrolment of 285 from

grade three to eight, and has more than 22 full-time teachers and school administrators. Curriculum reform was still ongoing in the school during the time of the research. Some staff members were upgrading their qualifications from certificate to diploma level, as part of the curriculum reform process. The researcher conducted interviews and observations in this school during the first week of August, 2006. The school was running normally except that on one occasion the school was broken into, and one of the senior teacher's office stationery was stolen. However, this did not stop the operation of the school or hinder the study in any way as it was regarded as a minor problem. The matter was referred to the police for investigation.

Urban-2 is another church agency school and the research in this school was conducted during the second week of August, 2006. Though 16 teaching positions were available in this school, there were only 11 teaching staff, and there was a shortage of teachers in this school. At the time of the study, the school principal had just tendered his retirement application to the National Department of Education (NDOE) after teaching for 32 years and was awaiting a decision. In his absence, the deputy principal took over and was acting as the school principal. The school had a student enrolment of 180, however, student and teacher absenteeism was a common problem in this school. The school leadership was loose and there was little control. However, the major problem that affected the school was continuous tribal fighting that had existed for about four years within the vicinity of the school. This had greatly impacted on student enrolments, teacher attendance and attitudes towards the teaching profession. The school was thus unstable and this was described by the research participants, and it was also evident during the study.

Rural-1 is the third school that took part in the study and it is one of many church agency schools in Southern Highlands Province. It is a top-up primary school located in a rural setting. The study in this school took the whole of the third week of August, 2006. The school is quite large in the sense that there were 25 teachers and 230 students. During the time of the study, curriculum reform based on the outcomes-based education was still ongoing in the school. While some teachers in this school had diploma qualifications,

others who had certificates were upgrading their qualifications to diploma level as part of the teacher upgrade programme to meet the curriculum and education reform needs. This school was in the process of building a separate classroom to cater for children with disabilities in conjunction with the Callan Service Resource Centre in Mendi. When established, this school will then cater for the needs of children with disabilities from the Eastern End of Southern Highlands Province.

Rural-2 is the fourth school studied and it is also located in a rural setting in Southern Highlands Province and run by the government. The study in this school was conducted at the end of August, 2006. The school has a total enrolment of between 200 to 260 students and it is a big school as far as rural schools are concerned. There were only 16 staff members during the time of the study though the full faculty was supposed to be 22. During the time of the study, curriculum reform was ongoing, and some staff members were chosen to upgrade their qualifications from certificates to diploma level as part of the professional development programme to meet the curriculum reform needs. The school was unique because the principal was chosen as the facilitator of the teacher upgrading programme for the outcomes based curriculum. The position is called an Internal Assessor and the role is there for those teachers who were upgrading their qualifications to diploma level. Another vital feature was that this school was chosen as the host to conduct the school principal's in-service training as an upgrading course on how to conduct inspections on teachers at the school level. This is a shift of responsibility from the School Inspectors to the School Principals in line with the education reforms.

In each of the four schools, the researcher spent one full week, and interviews and observations were conducted during the same week. Where there was a need for clarification of ambiguous or confusing responses, follow-up interviews were conducted based on the results of the preliminary data analysis whilst still at the schools. The researcher stayed in each school from 8:00am to 4:00pm every day working with the research participants or transcribing and analysing the data on a laptop computer.

3.3 Research Plan for the Study

The procedure employed to collect data for this study consists of four main stages. These stages include: preparation and research approval stage; field work and data collection; data analysis and interpretation; summarizing and drawing conclusions. In order to collect authentic data, decisions were made at each stage to ensure that each data collection was not hindered. The researcher also ensured that at each stage of the research process, adequate and relevant data were collected effectively to save time, effort and other resources like funding. One reason was because of the topographic nature of the schools under study. That means the schools under study were widespread with the two urban schools being located in Mendi town, whilst the two rural schools were located 40-50 kilometers away in a rural area. While the two urban schools were easy to access, the rural schools were quite difficult due to the rugged and remote locations. Another reason was because of the limited time frame of four weeks of data collection in the schools under study as the researcher was on a NZAID scholarship and was required to return to the University of Waikato. It is important to describe each research stage to show how they were attended to by the researcher during the research process.

Figure 3.2: Layout of the research plan

STAGE ONE: PREPARATION AND APPROVAL

↓

Preliminary planning of the research process, research proposal and ethics committee approval, wrote letters of transmittal, developed specific interview questions

↓

STAGE TWO: FIELD WORK AND DATA COLLECTION

↓

Field work in the four schools in Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea

↓

Step 1	→	Administered semi-structured interview questions to the research participants: classroom teachers and school administrators

↓

Step 2	→	Preliminary analysis of the interview data and developed further questions on issues not covered or answered well

↓

Step 3	→	Follow-up interviews to clarify some ambiguous and confusing responses that were provided by the research participants

↓

Step 4	→	Conducted non-participant observations on respondents whilst in action in their own classrooms

↓

STAGE THREE: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

↓

Completed transcribing, data analysis, and interpreted the data collected through the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations

↓

STAGE FOUR: DRAWING CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

↓

Wrote the summary, conclusions and recommendations

3.3.1 Data Collection and Analysis Process

3.3.1.1 Preparation and research approval

For the research process, the researcher developed a research proposal and submitted that with the consent letters to the University of Waikato, School of Education Ethics Committee and the PNG National Department of Education (see Appendices G, H, I, J, K & L). The semi-structured interview schedules were prepared whilst still at the University of Waikato before data collection and this data collection schedule focussed on key themes of investigation derived from the literature. The researcher strived to ensure that the themes for the semi-structured interviews were in line with the research aims, the major research questions posed, and the literature pertaining to the main issues under investigation in the study.

3.3.1.2 Sources of data

For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations methods were used to collect data. It is worth mentioning here that the two data collection methods were used concurrently whilst present in the research contexts. However, several steps were taken during data collection. First the researcher had brief meetings with the school administrators of each school who then informed the teachers on how to go about the interviews and observations. This was done in an attempt to build a positive rapport with the staff members and to understand and familiarise with the research contexts. On the basis of understanding the research context, the researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations in the four schools.

Semi-structured interviews. For the purpose of the current study, semi-structured interview was considered appropriate because this allowed the researcher to collect in-depth data. Agreement was reached between the researcher, the research participants, and the school administration on the venue and time to conduct the interviews. In each

school, the school libraries were allocated by the principals as the interview location. The researcher was stationed in the library and the research participants came for the interviews following a time schedule that was drawn by the school administration. For each research participant an interview consent form was prepared which they were asked to sign after reading the research information before beginning the interview (see Appendix B).

The researcher interpreted the social setting and the phenomenon under investigation whilst in the four schools. Unwanted information was discarded whilst information pertaining to the phenomenon under inquiry was considered and collected. The researcher used semi-structured interviews so that the teachers and school administrators could freely express themselves. When appropriate the participants were probed with further questions to gauge their lived experiences and perspectives about the school cultural features and practices that influence inclusive education in the four schools. Semi-structured interviews also were used because the researcher knew that from their cultural perspectives the participants would give direct and specific answers with face-to-face interaction.

Preliminary data analysis and follow-up interview. Whilst still in the research context, the researcher conducted preliminary analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. Preliminary data analysis was done by attentively listening to the recorded tapes and making notes of responses which required further probes. Then follow-up interview questions and observation schedules were developed to further probe the research participants. The probes were used to clarify some points or to have the participants expand on ideas that were not clear or ambiguous during the initial interviews. Through this approach the researcher was able to elicit some of the most salient views, experiences and perspectives of the participants that might have been otherwise missed during the initial data collection.

Non-participant observation. In the current study non-participant observation was used as the second research method to collect data. However, only a selected number of

teachers were observed based on the information they provided during the initial interview and preliminary data analysis. When the participants to be observed were identified whilst at the schools, the researcher made appointments with them to enter their classrooms, with the permission of the school administration. The purpose of the observation was made known to the participants, and only on their approval, the researcher entered their classrooms on agreed times to conduct the observations. During the observations the researcher sat at the back of the classroom on a seat that was provided by the classroom teacher. In so doing, the researcher was able to collect in-depth and authentic data in a non-obtrusive manner whilst the teachers were in action in their classroom contexts. The observations started with the lesson and took between 20-40 minutes. The researcher took field notes using an observation schedule that was prepared (see Appendix F). After every three minutes the researcher took notes on the classroom cultural features and practices that were exhibited by the teachers whilst teaching. The classroom features and practices to take note were guided by the themes that emerged from the initial interview data.

3.3.1.3 Data analysis and interpretation

The researcher collected and analysed the qualitative data which was sourced from the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. This was done by using a pre-developed coding system formulated for this study (see Appendices E & F). According to Creswell (2005), when analysing raw qualitative data, one must refer to first-order concepts in the form of the languages used for communication, concepts that are widely used in the society or community under study and the different ways they express ideas, issues, problems, their everyday actions and practices. Deriving concepts from ethnography, the teachers and school administrators were considered as a cultural sharing-group who shared similar attributes, characteristics, beliefs, professional responsibilities, and language traits from the four school contexts under study as teaching agents towards fostering inclusive education (Creswell, 2005).

The data derived from the two methods of data collection were analysed using colour coding and thematic analysis procedures (Bouma, 1996; Bouma & Ling, 2004; Creswell, 2005; Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). First, the tape-recorded and field notes collected from the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations were transcribed verbatim. Once all the data was in the form of script, the researcher did colour coding and thematic analysis of all the scripts. Different colour codes were used for different themes that emerged for each of the scripts under analysis. For instance, a red colour code was used to highlight sentences, words, phrases or lines which referred to professional development and education on disabilities, a yellow colour code was used to highlight school cultural processes, and a blue colour code was used to highlight attitudes held by the teachers and school administrators towards inclusive education. The different highlighted texts were then placed in categories which included major and minor themes depending on what they attempted to describe (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In coding, the texts are formed into descriptions which are labelled and ideas that overlap and redundant are collapsed into themes (Creswell, 2005). All this was done by way of creating files and folders for all related codes, categories and themes.

During the data analysis, as well as producing descriptive data, the researcher was able to sort and sift through the text to identify similar phrases and relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher also identified patterns, distinct differences between sub-groups of the data collected and, where appropriate, related the data to each of the main themes of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that data can also be broken down into manageable units by making connections with words and semantics. Hence, information deemed important was placed under the categories, major themes and sub-themes identified. However, as suggested by Creswell (1994) and Merriam (1988), as a precautionary measure and for the purposes of maintaining validity of the data, reference was constantly made to the data collected from the observations and interviews concurrently.

3.3.1.4 Drawing conclusions, summary and recommendations.

When all the data had been analysed and interpreted, conclusions were drawn by identifying the most salient themes that had emerged from the entire study. Special consideration was made to ensure that the final research results, interpretations, findings and conclusions drawn actually answered the two major research questions and were in line with the overall purpose of the study. Conclusions and findings as such paved the way for the researcher to make appropriate recommendations for future research, and to suggest actions for education of children with disabilities in the regular schools in Southern Highlands Province.

3.3.2 Issues of Validity and Reliability in the Study

Validity and reliability are quality assurance and data verification issues that were considered important in the study. Hence, the following issues were taken into account with the hope of maintaining authenticity of the data collected, analysed, interpretation process, and the research findings. The most vital quality issues that were considered in this study include validity and reliability of the data collection and analysis procedures, and how the researcher arrived at the research findings. This was done to ensure that the data collected from the two data collection methods was accurate and answered what was initially sought. The issues of maintaining quality are explained below to show how they were upheld in the current study.

Validity.   There are two main types of validity, internal validity and external validity (Bell, 1993; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Merriam, 1988). Firstly, with regard to internal validity, the researcher used methodological triangulation approach to ensure that findings were congruent with the social reality under inquiry. That meant the researcher used semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations concurrently as a methodological triangulation process in an attempt to authenticate the data collected from the two methods. Triangulation as such allowed the researcher to validate the quality of data analysis by checking the consistency of the data content, meaning structures, and the

findings of the study using different methods of data collection (Cohen & Manion, 1994). According to Creswell (1994), as qualitative data is not bias free, the triangulation method is an appropriate way to neutralise and find convergence of results, other sources of data, investigators and methods. The notion of neutrality refers to the balancing of the data by using two or more methods, or participants in a study. On the other hand, convergence is when similar meanings, interpretations and findings from two or more sources are merged to give a bigger, more balanced picture of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). Hence, the notion of neutrality and convergence were upheld in this study by merging the interview and observation data from the four different schools in the analysis.

Secondly, external validity is concerned with the extent to which the results of the study can be generalised to the wider population (Bell, 1993; Bouma, 1996; Creswell, 2005). According to Merriam (1988), this is called population validity. However, due to the non-representativeness of samples in the current study, which involved only four primary schools in SHP, population validity could not be established and this means the findings of the study are not generalisable to other primary schools in SHP, or PNG at large. However, according to Merriam (1998) and Bouma (1996), some aspects of the findings may be relevant to what would be happening towards the inclusion of children with disabilities into the regular schools in SHP as the study was conducted in this province.

Reliability. Reliability refers to the stableness and consistency of the responses of the research instruments and methods (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 1988). In order to maintain reliability of the data collected, the researcher in this study did several things. Firstly, the researcher used the methodological triangulation process of data collection as mentioned above (Creswell, 1994, 2002, 2005). Secondly, a research plan for the study was developed which clearly described how the study was conducted, and how the findings were derived from the data. This involved how the researcher entered the research site, the application of the two data collection methods, preliminary data analysis which paved way for the researcher to elicit more data and clarification. Thirdly, whilst still at the research site the researcher analysed the data collected from the two methods and asked

the participants to look through the themes and categories that emerged from the data. Creswell (1994) also notes that in order to increase the reliability of the data, data collected can be given back to the participants who can verify the information. Next, as qualitative research advocates a reflexive approach, the researcher strived to ensure that his personal biases, lived experiences and prior knowledge about the principle of inclusive practices in PNG were identified and incorporated in the entire research process. Creswell (2005) also supports that "… reflexivity means that the researchers reflect on their own biases, values, and assumptions and actively write them into their research" (p. 50). Through the reflexive process, the researcher was able to identify the most salient and useful themes that emerged from the data collected and analysed. In so doing, the researcher tried to ensure that the data collected from the two data collection methods was consistent with the researcher's own perspectives and lived experiences.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

In educational and scientific research, the participants and the context in which the study is done are two vital elements of the research process that require protection from being exploited (Bouma, 1996; Harker, 1999). The researcher in this study endeavoured to observe the major principles of ethical considerations as a way of respecting the research participants, the research contexts and to protect the information they provided. In this study both the western and indigenous ethical perspectives, specifically the Melanesian world-view were considered. Therefore, how the researcher conducted the current study along these two major ethical stand points warrants explanation.

3.4.1 Melanesian worldview on ethical procedures for research

This study was conducted within four indigenous school cultural contexts in Southern Highlands Province in PNG. Educational research is associated with various cultures as the social milieu in which problems can be identified and appropriate redemptive strategies can be formulated. According to Digim'Rina (1997) and Kulwaum (2000), most Melanesians would want something positive in return for sharing their cultural

knowledge. This is derived from mainly four sources in the PNG context. Firstly, from the environment as a source of food materials and spiritual satisfaction or fulfilment. Secondly, from aesthetic knowledge gained from carvings, magic, dances, and land from ancestors. Thirdly, from social survival through the understanding of land and group's histories, myths of origin, sorcery and healing powers. Finally, from the techniques of production which are often associated with human social relations and embedded in the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and the wider macrosystem of a society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979,1989, 1993).

From the Melanesian perspective, particularly in the location where the study was conducted, permission and approval to have access to the cultural knowledge are negotiated with people in authority such as the principals of schools. However, Baiio (2004) argues that this kind of practice has to be thoroughly negotiated at the initial stages before collecting data. From the Melanesian world-view, it is acceptable that the negotiation for permission and returns in the form of benefits can be done and negotiated by a village chief or the school principal on behalf of a family, tribe, clan, or kinship based communities. This is culturally acceptable, as the others like the teachers would abide by the decisions made by their leaders or chiefs like the school principals.

3.4.2 Ethical protocol for this study

The researcher in this study strived to ensure that proper established ethical processes and procedures were followed at all times. Firstly, an ethical application and research proposal was formulated and presented to the School of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato. After some minor changes, the ethical application was approved (see Appendix G). Secondly, an ethical approval and research proposal was lodged to the Policy, Research and Communication Division within the National Department of Education (NDOE) in PNG and this was also approved (see Appendices K & L). A consent letter together with other research information to conduct the research in the four schools was sent to the Southern Highlands Provincial Education Board, and to the Assistant Secretary (see Appendices I & J). Full consent was also sought from the

Southern Highlands Catholic Education Secretary for access to Catholic Education Agency schools. Consent letters and research information were also sent to the principals of the four schools under study (see Appendix H). All research approval was subsequently granted and consolidated before the researcher left for PNG to collect the data. The major ethical principles and how these were upheld in the study are explained below.

Access and informed consent for research participants. The researcher had access to the research participants by way of seeking consent in writing. Firstly, a letter was sent to the school principals concerned seeking their consent to conduct the research in their respective schools (see appendix H). Secondly, whilst in the individual schools, the researcher sought to communicate clearly the research purpose, possible adverse effects, and the benefits of the research to the participants in order for them to make their own informed choices. Then the participants were allowed an opportunity to give consent through the consent form which they signed to voluntarily take part in the study (see Appendix B). Only those staff members who felt comfortable and signed the consent form took part in the study. Thirdly, the research participants were told they could continue or withdraw from the study right from the beginning or at the end of the first week into the study. This was considered vital for the research project to proceed smoothly along the established ethical procedures of the University of Waikato and the National Department of Education in PNG. This action was also considered to avoid the study being disrupted by the participants at any time of the different stages of the study. Next, the participants' teaching times were observed and they were asked to take part in the study whenever they were free. Their teaching duties were not disturbed as they were following an agreed time schedule drawn up by the school administration.

Establishing confidentiality. The researcher in this study made sure that information provided was kept confidential, by keeping it in a safe storage and not disclosing it to any third party. It was accessible only by the researcher and subsequently incorporated into the research project. Because the researcher came from the same cultural background as the research participants, he was aware that certain information needed to be kept strictly

confidential like the causes of disabilities. For instance, interview information given by a research participant revealed that a certain child's disability condition was caused by the mother's promiscuity. If the father's relatives had known about this, they might have retaliated by demanding compensation from the mother's relatives. If there was disagreement this could have led to conflict or sometimes tribal warfare.

Participants' right to decline and privacy. The researcher in this study was of the view that the choice of having the freedom to share information pertaining to their individual lives was the prerogative of the research participants. The researcher also was of the view that any researcher who dealt with human beings as the research subjects needs to be aware of any aspect of the research activity that might have impinged on the individual's right to privacy. Firstly, it related to the sensitivity of the information that was provided for the research purpose. Here the researcher made an informed judgment on how threatening the information that was gathered might be. Some information was deemed more personal and threatening than others and therefore as a show of respect, he asked how the participants wanted the information to be shared and used in the study. Secondly, the research context in this study was public schools where children with disabilities were taught together with other children. That means the manner in which the information was gathered and the subsequent results could have damaged the credibility of the institutions involved in the study. Hence, the researcher used code names such as Urban-1, Urban-2, Rural-1, and Rural-2 to denote the schools in order to identify and protect the schools. Thirdly, how the information was gathered and disseminated required careful attention and scrutiny. That meant that during the data analysis and final write-up, individual names of the research participants were not mentioned and publicised. Instead pseudonyms (e.g., Rural-1/T1) and group representations (e.g., school administrators or teachers) were used in the data analysis and discussion to protect who provided what information and at which place.

Arrangement for participants to receive information. The researcher ensured that information that was collected through the interviews and observations was accessible to the research participants. For instance, after each interview the research participants were

asked to go through the recorded tapes and in some cases the preliminary data transcripts so that they could identify if anything recorded, written or noted was contradictory to what they believed or thought they had meant. Also after each observation, the participants were asked to go through the observation data to ensure that the data written did not in any way bring disrepute to themselves or their students. Also, an arrangement was made with each school principal to go through the tapes recorded and other transcripts at the completion of the study in each school. The principals listened to what their teachers said and also their own interviews. The principals' comments were taken into consideration. Finally, an agreement was reached between the researcher and the principals of the four schools to send a hard bound copy of the complete thesis to each school that took part in the study.

3.5   Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has discussed the theoretical framework and research methodology used for the study. The use of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which includes the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem has been presented. The interpretive/naturalistic research paradigm, qualitative approach, and the case study were explained. The main purpose for using the interpretative/naturalistic paradigm and the associated approaches was to identify how the teachers and school administrators made meaning out of their school and classroom social contexts or natural settings. In the data collection, the experienced and graduate teachers, and school administrators formed bulk of the data. The study followed a pre-planned research plan which guided the entire research process. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations, which were used for the purposes of triangulation and to maintain authenticity of the data. The issues of reliability and validity, and ethical considerations were also given prominence in this study. Further, due to the nature of case study, four schools were involved, categorised as urban and rural. The next chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the research data collected from the four schools in Southern Highlands Province.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the data that were collected from the 19 participants in the four schools under study. These schools were categorised as being in a rural or urban setting and the rationale for this identification is provided in Chapter Three (see section 3.2.6). The chapter is divided into four major sections within which some categories, major themes, and sub-themes that emerged from the colour coding, categorisation, and thematic analysis process are presented. Firstly, the staff understanding of special and inclusive education concepts is provided. Secondly, a section on school cultural leadership and organisational practices found in the four schools is presented. Thirdly, issues pertaining to the school cultural features and practices, and implications for staff are discussed. Finally, there is a section on school cultural policies and practices that have influenced the inclusion of children with disabilities in the four schools in Southern Highlands Province. The data is presented in four sections with themes that emerged for the purposes of clarity and coherence.

4.1 Staff understanding of Special and Inclusive Education Concepts

The researcher attempted to gauge the teachers' and school administrators' views, perspectives and understanding about the concepts of special and inclusive education. It was important to understand the concepts and terminology because their understanding influenced the fostering of inclusive education practices in the regular schools under study. While the understanding of what constituted special and inclusive education was quite diverse, many teachers and school administrators had heard about the concepts, either from their teaching experiences, further studies or in-service training that they had attended. From the interview data two themes: 'views and definitions on special and

inclusive concepts', and 'need for special and inclusive education in schools' emerged and each of these is explained below.

4.1.1 Views and definitions on special and inclusive concepts

According to the interview data, the teachers and school administrators had differing personal understanding of the special education and inclusive education concepts. Their understanding of special and inclusive education concepts varied depending on whether they had been exposed to these concepts before or not. It was evident that most teachers and school administrators who had been introduced to special and inclusive education concepts either through their college training, further study opportunities, or in-service training were able to define special and 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 whatever, like students who have disabilities or students who are not normal, they stay together in the same classroom, where we treat them all equally. (Rural-2/P)

> Special education is a course that is assigned for people with special needs. I am talking about people who are disabled. (Urban-1/T2)

> I think to my understanding, inclusive education means bringing them together or put them along with those normal children in the same school where they can be educated together with the normal children. Those people with special needs can learn these things together with the normal children. (Rural-1/T3)

These responses show that some of the teachers and school administrators who had attended some form of training on special and inclusive education had some knowledge and understanding of the concepts of special and inclusive education. However, although they had gone through some form of training in special and inclusive education, the implementation part of it at the school and classroom level was lacking. In contrast, the teachers and school administrators who did not have any special and inclusive education background defined the concepts in this manner:

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Special education to my understanding is … I have less ideas…because I have not heard of the word special education. It may be something to do with those who are deaf, those who are dumb and those who are unfortunate and are unable to go to school. This is my understanding. (Rural-1/T2)

Special education is some kind of training. I have attended the Port Moresby Special Resource Centre there and I have seen few of the schools there. I also have taken some courses there and they told us that these children would be enrolling in our schools so that they can be educated like the rest of the other students. (Urban-2/P)

The following interview took place between the researcher and an experienced teacher in one of the rural schools:

Researcher: Can you explain to me what you know about inclusive education?
Interviewee: Inclusive education …I have no idea so what is it?
Researcher: Think along the lines of including everyone in your classroom and lessons no matter what.
Interviewee: Yes, inclusive education may be something related to giving education especially for the disabled children. But there is no school or programme for them here. We do not have that type of education to provide to the village people and stuff like that. And also they find it hard to read or even write. (Rural-2/T2)

It appears that this group of professionals did not have an understanding of special and inclusive education, although they had minimal understanding about the education for children with disabilities. Due to the lack of ability to define the key concepts of special and inclusive education, they appeared to be confused and this apparently portrayed what was actually going on at the classroom level. These educators lacked the basic understanding of the concepts of special and inclusive education. This appeared to have an impact on their personal understanding of the differences between the various forms of disabilities like learning difficulties and behavior problems. When this particular teacher was observed in action in the classroom students' individual learning needs were met in a minimal way.

The interview data further revealed the understanding of the concepts of special education, inclusive education and various forms of disability by the educators and the

influence this knowledge had on their teaching practices. There was a marked difference in the way these concepts were understood, defined and applied in the classroom and school contexts. Gender differences were apparent in the answers of the female staff as they stated that they understood the concepts from the perspective of their own children. Urban-1/T2 for example stated that "when I conceive disabilities, I think of my own children being in that situation." Conversely, their male counterparts conceived of disabilities in terms of impairments. "Special and inclusive education are for those with missing body parts" (Rural-2/T2). Two thirds of the educators conceived disabilities along tribal conflicts, poverty and socio-economic circumstances that had prevailed in their area. For instance, a comment was made that "in our school we have some children with disabilities which I believe came about as a result of the on-going tribal fights near this school and [the children] had been forced to live far [away] in ghettoes in poverty" (Urban-2/P).

A quarter of the staff also had a stereotypical view and idea that children who came from the village setting had problems and disabilities while those who came from towns, especially working parents' children, learn better in school. Urban-1/T1, for example, asserted that "I find it very difficult to teach village children unlike those who come from the towns, and especially from working families." Another teacher who had been teaching there for the past 15 years also made a similar observation that "children who come from the village are always difficult to teach and are the most problematic kids in my classroom" (Rural-2/T3). However, when observations were made in two classrooms in this particular school (Rural-2), the three students who demonstrated the most challenging behavior came from town setting and their parents were working as teachers and nurses. Further, the child who was leading the classroom in terms of academic achievement came from a very remote village so this view was not upheld.

4.1.2 Need for special and inclusive education in schools

It was seen from the interview data, especially after going through the interview sessions that nearly all the teachers and school administrators who took part in the study expressed

the need for special and inclusive education practices to be introduced in schools. However, from the experiences of the four schools that took part in the study, inclusive education was already a reality because children with disabilities were included in the schools. The study stimulated the educators' thoughts and understanding about special and inclusive education. Hence, a teacher expressed that "we must introduce special and inclusive education programmes and produce specialists in special education. We should have a committee leading this as we already have children with disabilities in our schools. I don't know if we have any specialist or committee in place, but we should" (Rural-2/T3). This teacher's suggestion is obviously expressed after going through the interview where the value of education for the children with disabilities was exposed. Further, the following suggestions were made in regard to the need for special and inclusive education in their schools:

> I think the idea of inclusive education was not here in the country few years ago… I think inclusive education is really good because you see most people are disabled like deaf or blind and they are hidden away at home but they have the ability like anybody else. (Urban-1/T2)

> From my general point of view, in each school there must be specially trained teachers who will cater for the learning needs of the children with disabilities. If we take in grade three children, we will have to check which children have disabilities and then create a class where a teacher will have to bring them up from grade three to grade eight and give equal opportunities for all children. (Urban-1/P)

These views demonstrate that most of the staff were open to inclusive education ideas and they supported it. This was clearly shown by the way they openly expressed the need for in-service training and further study opportunities, so that they could be made aware of how to cater for the needs of children with disabilities in the regular classrooms.

4.2 School Cultural Leadership and Organisational Practices

The education of children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms placed a greater demand on how the school administrators performed and executed their

leadership roles. School administrators as leaders appeared to play a pivotal role in terms of the school organisation and re-organisation. The school administrators also saw that their leadership roles had changed with the introduction of the outcomes-based education in the schools in Southern Highlands Province. During the interviews, much information was obtained from the school administrators on how they promoted and influenced inclusive education in the four schools. 'School management and organisation' and 'school administrator and teacher relationships for inclusion' emerged from the data which are necessary for inclusion.

4.2.1 School management and organi*s*ation

According to the interview data, the school administrators appeared to be obsessed and concerned about, the way they were managing and organising the school and their inspections. Most school administrators interviewed stated that they were strictly following their specific duty statements as that was what the school inspectors/standard officers were looking at when they were doing their performance based assessment and inspections. For example, Urban-1/P stated that "I have a list of duty statements to follow and if I don't follow those then definitely my inspection report will be affected." That meant the inspections that were conducted by the standard officers had influenced the way the schools were organised and managed. Another school administrator stated, "whether I have children with disabilities or not, I have to follow my duty statements as that is what the inspectors will be looking at when they are assessing my overall performance for promotions or demotions as well as for my yearly salary increments" (Rural-2/P). The researcher then took some time to look through the school administrators' duty statements and there were differences. According to the duty statements, while the job of the principal was to do with management the deputy principal kept school records and did assessment.

However, neither of the duty statements made a mention of how the learning needs of the children with disabilities would be met in the regular schools and classrooms. The statements were in their entirety based on assessment procedures, disciplinary measures,

professional development, and curriculum issues. One principal for instance made a mention that "I follow the duty statement which is a centrally formulated list of statements and I did not know that I should consider the learning needs of children with disabilities as well" (Urban-2/P). This highlights that the way they were organising and managing the school did not meet everyone's learning needs, particularly the children with disabilities who were already enrolled in the four schools.

The interview data revealed that the school administrators paid attention to several particular issues. One of the issues they looked at was allocation of staff responsibilities and the grades to teach as illustrated in the following statement: "What I do is that during the beginning of the year I allocate teachers their grades to teach depending on their qualifications and teaching experiences" (Urban-1/P). Another school administrator had the view that "teacher allocation is my responsibility, but I get their views first on which grades they want to teach and then I make my final decisions" (Rural-2/P). This indicates a collaborative and consultative decision making process. However, when closely looked at, this particular school administrator was the assessor of the outcomes-based education curriculum. This principal had just returned from a formal training in Port Moresby for the trainers' course on outcomes-based curriculum assessment for teachers.

According to the data, six out of the seven school administrators held certificate qualification, which is lower than a diploma and they had not attended any special or inclusive education courses or in-service training. For instance, when asked about what inclusive education was, one of the school administrators gave a vague answer that "it maybe something to do with including the parents and society…maybe but I don't know" (Rural-1/DP). Their understanding of the concepts of special and inclusive education was quite minimal. Hence, their practices at the school level were more focused on the general students in a school-wide approach and children with disabilities apparently were 'sandwiched' among them. Though they knew the existence of some children with disabilities at the school, the school environments were not specifically modified for such children to be educated. Rural-2/P revealed that "I have seen some children in the school with crippled legs, but I thought it was the parents' duty to provide a crutch to come to

school." Another school administrator stated, "I have seen a small girl who is deaf walk in and out of every classroom in my school and I thought the Callan Service people would come and help her, but they have not come to help her out yet. The father is waiting for them too" (Rural-1/DP). It appears that the school administrators viewed the education of the children with disabilities to be the parents' role and they considered themselves to be part of the support services.

However, all the school administrators who took part in the study revealed that due to the outcomes-based curriculum reform in PNG, their traditional roles had changed from being only school administrators to that of inspectors as well. For instance, one school administrator observed: "I am now carrying out inspections for education officers who are on levels one to three and the Standard Officer inspects other teachers who are above education officer level three including myself" (Urban-1/P). In so doing, the school administrators, especially the principals were at liberty to make decisions which could affect the staff as well as the students. For instance a principal stated: "I saw one child not performing at grade five level so I told the teacher to put the child to grade four and I also informed the grade four teacher about it. If it was before, the inspector would not allow me to do this, but now I can use my discretion and make decisions" (Rural-2/P). This appears to show support for the learning needs of the child, but when closely looked at the main reason was out of concern for the child who was struggling academically. However, the school administrator was at liberty to make such a decision and considered he had the authority to do so.

4.2.2 School administrator and teacher relationships for inclusion

The relationship between the school administrators and the classroom teachers required investigating. The interview data revealed two ways in which the staff perceived each other. First, the school administrators perceived the teachers to be classroom teachers discharging their roles and responsibilities according to their levels or positions of teaching. For instance, as one school administrator saw it, "teachers perform their professional duties according to the positions they are occupying like level two teachers

perform at that level and level three teachers at that level and so on. They must not perform below or beyond that" (Rural-2/P). At the same time the school administrators saw themselves as education officers with power, force, who could direct teachers at any time to execute their tasks. This attitude is illustrated in the following excerpts from two principals' interviews:

> I have given behavior management roles to a teacher from the Huli, Tari region in Southern Highlands Province. This is because the students fear Tari people and this teacher is very strict, hard, and does not care about anybody, even the big students fear him and they listen to him. If I gave it to a coastal person or teachers from other provinces, the kids here wouldn't listen to them. (Rural-2/P)

> When I give responsibilities to classroom teachers, they have to perform. At the same time I am now working as the school inspector and they have to listen. They know that I am always at the school watching on how they perform on daily basis. Otherwise their final inspection report will tell who they are and how they have been working. (Urban-2/P)

This shows that the school administrators perceived themselves as 'bosses' or from a bureaucratic point of view as supervisors who were out there in the school to be on the lookout at all times to ensure that the teachers performed their duties efficiently. The school administrators saw themselves as authorities at the school with power and influence to make decisions that could promote, demote or in extreme cases make recommendations for termination. For instance one participant said, "if teachers misbehave, the parents are also watching and I have to write a report for his/her demotion or termination as this is a church agency school" (Rural-1/DP). However, the interview data further revealed that when making decisions that would affect the profession of the teacher in the long run, they were always conscious of the repercussions in terms of retaliation by the teacher alone or as a clan, as they saw the teachers' job as their source of income. The full impact of this process can be seen in the following statements:

> Even though I make decisions according to what the authorities in the headquarters say, I have to be careful when demoting or terminating teachers. I can be attacked as the teacher's income does not benefit himself alone but also the tribe and they can come after me. (Urban-1/P)

You are talking about making really tough decisions here when writing reports. I am a local person so I don't care. I can write good or bad reports depending on what they do. They have to work and earn their living. If they challenge me I can challenge them too as this school is in my land. But I don't know about my colleagues from other provinces who are in this province as principals. They have to be careful when making decisions on teachers. (Urban-2/P)

The data revealed a situation whereby the school administrators saw themselves as being detached from the teachers and what was actually going on in the classroom. There appeared to be a gap between how the teachers were seen from the positions of the school administrators.

On the other hand, the teachers held their own views about their relationship with the school administrators. Though many teachers viewed the school administrators as authority figures in the school, they had to build positive relationships with them so that they could benefit from their leadership and position. As one teacher remarked, "we know that the principal is the person who can write reports on what we do and how we teach so we have to do it efficiently" (Urban-1/T2). Another teacher supported this idea when he stated, "I ensure that the principal is happy with what I do so that when I ask for things he can make way for me easily" (Rural-1/T1). The third teacher who was a female stated that; "… the gender equity policy is in place so when I do my job properly, I can be promoted, but the principal makes the recommendations" (Rural-2/T3). This shows a situation whereby the teachers still viewed the school administrators as people with authority and power. At the same time the kind of relationships they established would have impacted on how they could get along with the school administration.

The researcher also sought the kind of help the teachers received from other sources such as the school administrators to include all learners in the regular classroom. It was revealed that the kind of help they received depended on who the principal was; whether a male or a female, coastal person or a highlands person, whether they were Christians or non-Christians. It appeared that the school administrators who were Christians, especially from the church run schools and those who were females were more approachable and easy to talk to. As Urban-1/T3 stated, "my principal supports me really

well because he is a God fearing man." A graduate teacher observed that; "…the deputy principal is a female and she has heart for what I do. She told me that I am doing fine to prepare for my inspections" (Rural-1/T2). However, three quarters of the teachers perceived non-Christians and male teachers differently. In one instance a comment was made that, "… the principal does not go to church and he drinks too much. I don't know whether he knows what he is doing at the school" (Urban-2/T3). However, from the follow-up interviews, it was established that this particular teacher had been on and off from school duties and therefore was not on the payroll through the principal's recommendations. Hence, a personal grudge possibly prompted him to make this kind of comment about the school principal.

4.3 School Cultural Features and Practices, and Implications for Staff

At the generic sense, school culture in this study has been referred to as 'how things were done in the contexts of the schools that took part in the study'. From the examination of the interview and observation transcripts, 'school culture' emerged as a major category. Three themes emerged within this category and they were named; 'school as a social community', 'collective values associated with inclusion', and 'collaborative and support provisions'. In the first of these themes, 'acceptance of everyone in the school' as a sub-theme was identified. In the second theme, 'expectations for all students' and 'equal valuing of all students' emerged. In the third theme, 'staff and parents collaboration and partnership', and 'school inspection and support services' emerged as sub-themes. The following section explains each of these themes.

4.3.1 School as a social community

The school context has been considered to be a place for learning new ideas and skills. The interview data revealed that the respondents viewed the school to be a place where teachers taught children. However, while most teachers felt that they had a responsibility to teach, children were perceived to be detached from the teachers and the school administrators. Children were only considered as learners, physically present in the

classroom and school context to learn, but were not thought of as persons with an inner ability to contribute towards the learning process. For instance, in the words of Urban-1/T2 "children come to school and we are here to teach them and then they go home. They don't contribute much and that's how I see." This revealed a situation where there was evidence of school administrator superiority over the teachers and children, and teacher superiority over the children as learners. The sub-theme discussed below emerged from the data analysis and reveals how the staff considered the school environment as a social community for learning and development of all children.

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

> Every child has the right to learn, whether male or female or 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 normal children. (Urban-1/T1)

A deputy principal made a very similar comment when he said:

> Like a little boy who is 'leg nogut' (bad leg) lives far and comes to school but I tell the teachers to let him in the classroom even when he is late to school. He does not have a house and he lives far away but he is still allowed to come to our school. (Urban-2/DP)

A teacher who had some years of teaching experience revealed a similar view point 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. (Ruran-1/T3)

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However, when closely observed at the school level, the idea of educating all children in the same school and classroom was easier said than done. Nonetheless, a few school professionals, particularly those who had some special education training whether during their teacher training, in-service training or further teacher up-grade studies had some ideas on how to cater for individual differences and to meet children's specific needs. For instance, during the observation of a graduate teacher's class in an upper primary school (Urban-1), students were organised in groups and the teacher ensured that all children participated and contributed ideas to arrive at an answer and individual children's learning needs were attended through a one-on-one basis.

The school administrators and teachers interviewed had a view that all children were accepted into their schools and classrooms. However, the degree of acceptance entirely depended on the individual staff. While some personnel saw the degree of acceptance based on human rights, others accepted students with disabilities into their school and classrooms out of personal sympathy and compassion. This may be illustrated by the following comments:

> I feel sorry for them…when I compare myself and the lives of the kids today, I feel sorry. 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. (Rural-2/T2)

> Yes, 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. (Urban-2/P)

On the other hand, the interview data revealed that the degree of acceptance for children with disabilities in the regular classrooms appeared to be strongly influenced by motherhood/femininity and fatherhood/masculinity experiences. While teachers who were single felt no moral and parental obligation to accept the children with disabilities into the regular classrooms, the staff who had children of their own felt that as parents they had to accept children of other parents. This view was suggested in the statement that "I treat all of them as my own children and thus accept them and teach them no matter what difficulties they face" (Rural-1/DP). In the four schools, nearly all female

staff appeared to have more concern for the children who faced difficulties of some nature then their male counterparts. For instance, one female teacher stated that "if my child was rejected by another teacher because of the disability, I would not feel good because as a mother of my own children I have to accept all children in my classroom" (Rural-2/T1). The data suggests that the willingness to include children with disabilities was rendered as a moral and parental obligation to give the children chances of education in the regular classrooms.

Other staff, particularly those who came from the church-run schools had a different view, which was a religious world view of looking at a child and accepting that person as an image of Christ. Many teachers who were teaching in the church-run schools saw the children as Christ-like and thus were obliged to accept them and teach them. One senior teacher commented that:

> I think all the children are special, especially when he or she is not catching up with the rest of the children I am hurt too as a teacher and more or less like a mother too. And I take him or her as Christ's image. That is most important thing to me because I always imagine that he or she is another Christ sitting in the classroom so I have to treat him or her in the same way I would treat the Lord. So I make I sure I treat him or her to the best I can. (Rural-2/T2)

One school administrator commented that:

> This is a mission run school and all children have to be accepted and treated equally. We are all Christians and we follow what the Bible and that is, all human beings must be treated with care and respect as Christ himself did…We are all God's children and no one is to be rejected because of any disabilities or difficulties they may face in their lives. (Urban-1/P)

The interview and observation data also revealed that teachers from the church-run schools were more loyal and attuned to their church principles and obligations than teachers from the government-run schools. Some of the reasons identified were because of the fact that teachers in the church-run schools were accountable to the church leaders in terms of recruitment and employment. The presence of the pastors as observers of the general running of the schools and the schools proximity to the church-run Callan

Services which was already providing in-service training and support towards inclusive education to the staff in school Urban-1 was also an influential factor. These 'checks and balances' appeared to be missing in the government-run schools despite the school administrators and school inspectors presence to provide advice on school management and policy implementation responsibilities.

4.3.2 Collective values associated with inclusion

Collective values are beliefs and aspirations that the teachers and school administrators held or perceived for all children in regards to their chances of education within the regular education system in Southern Highlands Province. Most teachers and school administrators held differing views on the children as human beings, their individual conditions, disabilities, abilities, their socio-economic status, and their general progress while in school. Whilst most of the values associated with the education of children with disabilities were to do with the individual teachers and their cultural context, the provision of education for all within the regular school and classroom was generally difficult to action. A senior teacher for example commented that "when children find it difficult I become frustrated but what can I do, I have to calm down and help them learn as they can be good at other things which make me happy" (Rural-1/T2). This shows that though most teachers were lacking in the specific skills for helping children with disabilities, they were already practising inclusive education out of love, compassion, professional, and moral obligations in the schools.

Expectations for all students. The interview data revealed that most teachers and school administrators 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 available and/or using braille and assistive communication aids like computers. Thus their expectations were that children with disabilities were to be educated in institutions such as the ones that are already in existence like the Callan Services Resource Center in Mendi, the Mt. Sion Center for the Blind in Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, and the Chesire Homes

in Port Moresby. A teacher observed that "we expect the children with disabilities to be in special schools like the Callan services Resource Center in Mendi as we cannot deal with them in this school" (Rural-2/T3). However, it appeared that these were the views of the staff who had not attended any special or inclusive education courses and in-services as there were less or no opportunities available for them.

From the interviews, those school professionals who had some ideas or skills on special and inclusive education had a different view. Urban-1/T2 for example stated that "when I started teaching I was expecting some children with disabilities in my class and so I was prepared to teach them like others." Another teacher who was a graduate commented that "in the college I attended, I learnt about including children with disabilities in my teaching programme so I expected them to be there and I am actually teaching a hearing problem child" (Rural-1/2). Due to the education reform, most staff 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 paid jobs. Their second expectation was to provide students with basic life skills so that when they return to their villages 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 respondents:

> Through the outcomes-based education, we expect some students to return to the village 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 village level. (Urban-1/DP)

> 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 live school. We are concentrating on academic subjects as well as the practical skills for students to take back home. (Rural-1/T2)

However, when closely observed at the school level, the specific needs of the children with disabilities were minimally targeted. Teachers and school administrators placed students into three categories which included: above average students, average students, and below average students. This was based on the students' academic work and

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performance, with some consideration of the practical subjects. The teachers expected all students to meet certain testing criteria in order to be eligible for one of the above categories. 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.

Equal valuing of all students. Most staff 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 to education. A teacher asserted that "I try to give equal opportunities to education to all children, whether they are disabled or not" (Rural-1/T3). Nearly all the respondents viewed the valuing of all children and providing education to all based on the fact that all children should be treated equally as human beings. One teacher therefore alluded that "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" (Urban-1/T1).

From the interviews, it was also apparent that most school professionals considered how to provide equal education opportunities from the religious point of view. This was quite evident in the two church-run schools where the following observations were made:

> This is a church-run school and we cannot mistreat any of our children in this school. They are Christ's image and all children have to be treated equally in teaching, assessing, practical work and other things as well. (Rural-1/DP)

Similarly, a teacher made the following remarks:

> Those teachers who are here in this school know that they are Christians and we have to act like Christians ourselves. We can't play bias games or ill-treat any of the children that we are teaching. Though they make me angry some times, I have to treat them equally and that is part of or church belief. (Urban-1/T2)

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On the other hand, those teachers and school administrators from the government run schools had differing viewpoints about giving equal opportunities to all children. For instance, a teacher stated that "yes I know that children should be treated equally but not all the time as they are often at fault" (Rural-2/T3). 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 "children make so many mistakes and I get angry but the law does not allow me to hit them. So I calm down and help those who are good" (Urban-2/T3). Half of the teachers had a different view, which was associated with their own society and community or relations. It was apparent that teachers treated those children who came from their own villages or who were in one way or another related to them, differently from those who were not related to them in any way. For instance, according to a senior teacher, "those children who come from my own village listen to me and do what I tell them to do than those children who come from other places. So I treat them like that too" (Urban-2/T3). This action had in one way or another a bearing in the way all children were valued, treated, taught, and eventually assessed in the classroom contexts.

4.3.3 Collaboration and support provisions

According to the interview data, it was apparent that some form of collaborative and support practices was already in place in the schools under study towards fostering inclusive education. Teachers and school administrators from both the urban and rural schools were aware of the need to include all children in the regular classrooms. As one teacher from an urban school stated, "our school considers the need to include all children in the classroom, whether with disabilities or not and the Parish Priest also supports this through extra funding and materials" (Urban-1/T3). All the respondents considered the support of Callan Services as timely and much needed. It was confirmed by an experienced teacher that "the work of Callan Services is really good for us teachers and the children's learning as they help us for our teaching, especially the inclusion of children with disabilities" (Urban-1/T2). However, staff members who were teaching in the remote schools expressed disappointment that Callan Services staff were not reaching

them. This sentiment was expressed by a senior teacher in a remote school when he questioned the availability of this particular support service by querying:

> If Callan Services is genuine about their work and to help everyone in this province, they have to reach out to other schools as well. Schools in the eastern end of SHP are yet to be reached out by Callan Services. No one is doing anything here so we need the help of Callan Services staff for the good of the children with disabilities and their families. (Rural-1/T2)

Nearly all the respondents who took part in the study expressed their feelings that special and inclusive education were vital components of the education system but the National Department of Education and the Provincial Division of Education were not doing enough to support them. One experienced teacher expressed this view point: "In my view the national and provincial education departments are responsible for not introducing the special and inclusive education policies to us and of course the training part" (Rural-2/T1). A school administrator agreed that "now I realise that the national and provincial governments are not supporting us in this very important area which I was not aware of until this time" (Urban-1/P).

Other agencies like the hospitals provided little or no support at all for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the schools under study. Although the principal of Urban-2 said that he got some form of support from the nearest hospital, other schools expressed that there was no support of any nature from this source. As one teacher stated, "we did not know that the hospital would also help us to identify children with disabilities and I cannot do it either" (Rural-2/T3). Another teacher had gained some understanding when she stated that "I thought education was teachers' responsibility but now I realise that other agencies should also help but I don't think they have helped us that much as far as I know" (Rural-1/T1).

Staff and parents' collaboration and partnership. The interview data revealed that most teachers considered the importance of school/home or teacher/parent collaboration for the learning of the children. Whilst there was some evidence of staff and parent collaboration in all the four schools, apparently parents only played roles which were

considered outside of the classroom activities. It was also evident that parent and teacher collaboration was done on voluntary basis. Urban-2/DP explained that "many parents say that their kids are like this and that, but from experience so many parents have no interest in the learning of the children and they have not shown up." The parents perceived the education of their children as the teachers' sole responsibility. Referring to the parents' lacking interest, Rural-1/T2 stated that "when parents are told to come for interviews on why their children are doing this and that, the parents are ignorant and know that the kids are in school and it is the teachers' responsibility to take care of them." A school administrator who had been teaching for the past 23 years affirmed that "many times the parents are lazy and they tell us that this is our child, so you can do whatever you want to do with them at school" (Rural-1/DP).

Other teachers had a view that parents only gave support when they were asked to do something or had penalties imposed on them when they did not show up to help the school. One of the major ways through which parents' support was evident was in the Parents' and Citizens' Committee (PNC) meetings. This was a meeting held every Monday during school days where parents do manual work, particularly in the rural schools and later deliberated on issues affecting the operations of the school. One teacher for instance mentioned that "during PNC meetings, not all parents come but at least they contribute towards the school improvement and we tell them what to do next" (Rural-2/T2). However, a school administrator in an urban school had a different view and said that "when parents don't listen to what I tell them to do, they have to pay fines and that is a must" (Urban-1/P). The consequences are that when fines that are imposed are not paid, the children are sent home to collect the money or their enrolment at the school could be terminated. However, when closely looked at the school policy of the four schools showed no record of this and there was no policy framework in place to support this course of action.

Some teachers pointed out that the reform curriculum, which provided an outcomes-based education was quite flexible and parents were encouraged to take part in the children's learning process. The researcher also observed in three schools that took part

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in the study that parents were encouraged to take an active role in teaching children traditional and cultural oriented skills, which were part of the outcomes-based education. One teacher made an observation that "the curriculum that we are using now is outcomes-based education and parents help in outside skills based activities such as weaving a mat and making a model house" (Rural-2/T1). The reform and outcomes-based education encouraged parents to contribute in areas that they were good at. For instance, one teacher stated that "if the topic for the week for my class was on 'birds', I identify a village hunter and he/she can explain the names of different birds and their eating habits in our own local vernacular as the usage of local vernacular is also encouraged in the outcomes-based education" (Rural-1/T3). In so doing, some parents and teachers work towards enhancing the learning of the children both in academic areas as well as in practical skills. However, whilst it was not explicitly shown from the data, the outcomes-based education curriculum, through the parents' and teachers' collaborative practices, had potential for meeting the learning needs of children with disabilities in the schools under study.

School inspection and support services. The school inspection system was considered to be an integral part of the education system in PNG. The inspection system played an important role whereby teachers and school administrators were encouraged, or some times forced, into implementing the education policies. Rural-1/T2 for instance observed that "we consider inspection to be a source through which the inspector provides us directions, advice on policies as well as school administration issues." A school principal provided a different angle when he stated, that "every year we have school inspectors coming to our school to see what we are doing at the school and also to inspect the teachers' performances which makes us to work hard" (Rural-2/T1). This means that inspectors played a vital role in terms of maintaining standards in schools through their inspection roles and practices. However, the interview data revealed that school inspectors were quite detached from the schools and independent from teachers and school administrators when they were doing the inspections. Their role was clearly defined by one teacher who pointed out that "school inspectors are not part of the school

staff, but they are like bosses who are out there to see us implement the education policies" (Urban-2/T2).

However, the staff members who took part in the study unanimously felt that the school inspectors had limited knowledge of the inclusive and special education concepts, the policies, and other associated practices. The respondents said that due to the school inspectors own limited or lack of knowledge on disabilities and inclusive education practices, teachers and school administrators were not informed or advised on how to go about including children with disabilities in regular classrooms. A long serving teacher expressed this idea in the following way:

> Inspectors come to our school to conduct inspections but they have no ideas about special and inclusive education. They should be the ones informing us on what to do in terms of educating children with disabilities in the regular classroom but so far they have done nothing. In my view… they don't have any ideas about children with disabilities so they cannot provide us anything. (Rural-1/T1)

This view point was further supported by a school administrator who commented:

> The name of the school inspectors has changed from inspectors to Standard Officers. That means they will not provide us advice but depend on the principals who are now called site leaders. However, from my experiences over the years even to this day, the Inspectors or Standard Officers act like bosses and they have not provided us with the skills we need on disabilities and inclusive education. May be themselves are not aware of the concepts or I don't know. (Urban-1/P)

In the views of the Site Leaders, the Standard Officers' roles towards the schools and teachers include: providing advice, planning the outcomes-based curriculum, directing teachers and school administrators on how to manage the school's resources and the policy and curriculum implementation. As he explained the inspector's role, one teacher stated that "Inspectors provide us with some direction and advice but most times they direct us to do this and that in regards to education policies and curriculum" (Rural-1/T3). Another experienced teacher observed that "school inspectors assume to be bosses and

they give us directions on what to do in the school and classroom levels, but they don't work alongside us" (Rural-1/T2).

Teachers may know how to include children with disabilities in the regular classrooms but they do not, and maybe they need to ask for assistance. This was suggested by one teacher that "if we are to learn and know about things we don't have to always expect the inspectors to feed us but rather we should ask as well so that if they know it they can provide us" (Urban-2/T1). This view was supported by a school principal who said that "some inspectors are doing further university studies and they may know how to include children with disabilities in the regular classroom so we should ask them" (Rural-2/P). These view points may be correct because from the researcher's experience some inspectors were on study leave during the research and maybe they do have inclusive education skills which were not tapped into by the teachers and school administrators alike.

The interview data further revealed that as a result of the outcomes-based education curriculum and the ecological assessment process it demanded, Standard Officers and Site Leaders (formerly school inspectors and principals) were required to assess the schools, the teachers, and the school administrators from an ecological perspective. Perhaps this is supported by a comment from an experienced teacher who suggested that "the roles of inspectors have changed as they are now required to assess us considering all the things that we are doing, everything including being in the communities" (Urban-2/T3). This widespread review of professional standards was supported by a Site Leader who stated that "due to the outcomes-based curriculum, inspectors and principals are required to look at everything a teacher or principal does and not just classroom things only, but also the local communities and their involvement must be considered" (Rural-2/P). Nearly all the teachers and school administrators who took part in the study expressed confidence in the new inspection model as it considered perspectives from different sources when making judgments on the staff members' performances. Nevertheless, in the course of discharging their professional duties, the inspection

approach did not consider the specific needs of children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms in Southern Highlands Province.

4.4 School Cultural Policies and Practices

Inclusive education recognises that all children, despite their abilities, disabilities or other shortcomings are to be educated in the regular 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 equal educational and social opportunities are made available to all children in a given locale. From the interview and observation data, it was apparent that most of the staff were not aware of the existence of school policies. However, the data revealed various view points held by the teachers and school administrators respectively. From the pool of data, three major themes emerged which include: 'special and inclusive education policies', changing school practices' and 'teacher education and experiences'. Each of these themes is discussed below with relevant excerpts derived from the interview data.

4.4.1 Special and Inclusive Education Policies

The interview data revealed that most teachers and school administrators considered that education should be provided to all learners. As one teacher remarked, "I think the education policy says that all children have to be educated in the same classroom as other children, but actually I have not seen the policy itself" (Rural-2/T3). The following sub-themes emerged from the interview data: 'existence of special and inclusive education policies', 'special and inclusive education policy development and implementation' and 'differences in understanding and implementing policies'. These sub-themes are explained in the following section.

Existence of special and inclusive education policies. It was seen from the interview data that almost all staff who took part in the study were unaware of the existence of special and inclusive education policies, whether at the school level or generally in PNG.

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As one teacher commented, "I don't know much about the education policies in PNG …
but children have the right to education" (Urban-1/T1). The same teacher stated that "at
the school level, as far as I know, I have never seen or heard of any special or inclusive
education policies" (Urban-1/T1). Nearly all the teachers who took part in the interview
made similar comments about the non-existence of special or inclusive education
policies. The following extracts explain what the teachers perceived about the existence
of special and inclusive education policies:

> I have not heard about the existence of either special or inclusive education
> policies in Papua New Guinea. Even at the school level we do not have these
> policies and I do not know whose responsibility it is. (Urban-1/T3)

> I think there may be policies but in regard to special and 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 also
> this is a restored school after the tribal fights and I don't think we have such
> policies in place. (Urban-2/T2)

An experienced teacher who had been teaching for the past 19 years and who just
completed a Bachelor of Education degree mentioned the following:

> We don't have any policies as such in this province so I can't say anything for
> that but I am aware that this kind of programme, especially to do with special
> and inclusive education are offered at Kaindi Teachers' College. And the trainee
> teachers from there they have background knowledge in that but when they
> come to our province, they cannot exercise this and they become classroom
> teachers only as there are no policies to support this in the province and at the
> school level as well. (Rural-1/T3)

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 as well in this school. (Rural-2/T2)

On the other hand, the school administrators who took part in the interview had their
version of how they perceived the existence of special and inclusive education policies.
However, most of these school administrators thought that it was the National

Department of Education (NDOE) or the Provincial Education Division who would instruct them how to formulate policies. For instance, one school administrator who had been a principal for seven years stated that "I don't think we have any special or inclusive education policies in this school because the authorities never told us about it" (Rural-2/P). The data further revealed that nearly all the school administrators were not aware of the existence of special or inclusive education policies. The following excerpts reveal the situation at two schools:

> As far as I know I have never heard of any special or inclusive education policies in PNG or even at the school level. Before I came here in this school, there were no policies on student behavior, assessment, and others. But I have school-wide rules for all the students in regard to students' behavior and conduct. (Rural-2/P)

> This school was affected by tribal fights so we have no policies in place yet. Even the school inspector never told us how to develop school policies. We also don't have anything in regard to special or inclusive education. There may be other schools that may have these policies, but I have no idea. (Urban-2/P)

The deputy principal of one rural school made the following observations;

> I have been teaching here for 23 years, but I have not heard or even seen any policies on special or inclusive education. But I know that all children have rights to education and they have to be educated here in our school and other normal children; even those with disabilities or other problems. (Rural-1/DP)

At the same time all the teachers and school administrators considered that all children had to be educated in the school that was closest to them. They thought that no matter what, all children have rights to education and they had to be given equal opportunities to education in their local schools. For instance, one teacher said that "we have to understand that all children have equal rights to education and we can't reject them from coming to this school. If we do we can be taken to court for denying their human rights" (Urban-1/T2). This view was shared by most of the school administrators that they try their best to include all the children in their respective schools, but there was no help in terms of policy framework that underpins rights to full inclusion from the Provincial Education Division as well as the National Department of Education .

Special and inclusive education policy development and implementation. The interview data revealed that the development of special and inclusive education policies was not well understood by the teachers and the school administrators alike. The conception of what constituted policy was also misconceived by the teachers and school administrators. They thought of policy solely in terms of rules that govern the school or the classroom practices. For instance, 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" (Rural-2/T2). A school administrator in an urban school stated that "I think we do have policies, but they are not about special or inclusive education" (Urban-1/P). However, when closely looked at the school level, there were no relevant documents for special and inclusive education policies. Though they had school and classroom rules which emphasised student behavior, relationships and conduct while in school, there was absence of special and inclusive education policies in all the schools that took part in the study. As one teacher commented, "at the school level they have not told us how to cater for the needs of children with disabilities through policies ... but I have developed classroom rules myself" (Rural-2/T1).

The data further showed that the teachers and school administrators alike took education policies for granted and there was not much concern about it. There was an absence of taking responsibility for formulating relevant policies at the school level. In the words of one teacher, "I think the school principal should know about policies on special and inclusive education as we were not told" (Urban-2/T2). Another teacher made a comment saying, "we are teachers and our job is to teach the children in the classroom so the principal and his deputy should have some policies, but I have not seen one myself" (Rural-1/T3). Similar sentiments were expressed by two school administrators when they expressed that:

> In my school we really do not have special and inclusive education policies at the moment, but we are still looking into it. May be sooner or later we might have one because the Callan Service people are around in our school and they might help us to develop special and inclusive education policies. ...the blame should also go to the provincial and national departments of education as they have not told us what to do in terms of policy development. (Urban-1/P)

The second school administrator made the following comment:

> The provincial and national governments did not tell us anything about special and inclusive education policies. We are also not aware of them at the school level. But we still allow all the children, whether with disabilities or not to come to this school. They have no other school to go to. Otherwise they will have to stay at home. (Rural-2/P)

The data appears to reflect a culture of blame whereby the teachers shifted the responsibility and blame on to the school administrators. On the other hand, the school administrators thought that it was the responsibility of the provincial and national governments to develop policies and then they and the teachers would implement them at the school level. However, this was not occurring in the four schools under study as no one seemed to be taking responsibility in formulating and implementing special and inclusive education policies. In all the four schools there was no evidence of special and inclusive education policies in existence.

Differences in understanding and implementing policies. The data revealed a situation whereby policies were understood slightly differently by various respondents. However, whilst most teachers and school administrators understood policies in terms of human rights and rights to education, others viewed it from the professional and moral perspectives. Rural-1/T2 for instance stated that "as far as I know the education policy states that all children have rights to be educated in the school as other normal children." A school administrator supported that "in my school we have a policy whereby all children can be educated and teachers must be prepared to teach them" (Urban-2/P). However, in reality the policies 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 19 years who said, "though the education department talks about policies we are not sure of its existence in this school" (Rural-2/T2).

The respondents also perceived the education policies in terms of their professional responsibilities. They viewed that as part of their teaching professional responsibility

they had to teach all children, whether with disabilities or not. One teacher stated that "… we are paid to teach all the children but I do admit that I find it very difficult to teach the children with disabilities because I did not go through any form of training in this area" (Urban-1/T2). Another teacher had a view that "I went through some training on how to teach children with disabilities in the regular classroom, and this is part of my teaching duties so I have to teach all children in the classroom" (Urban-2/T3). A school administrator also had the view that "I ensure that my teachers don't turn away any children because of their disabilities or problems, but the fact of the matter is that we have no specific policies in place for special and inclusive education. It is just part of our professional duties" (Rural-2/P).

Other research participants viewed the education policies in terms of their moral obligation. These respondents stated that it was ethically wrong to turn away children with disabilities. Therefore, even without understanding what special and inclusive education policies were all about, their view was that education policies allowed everyone into the regular classroom. One teacher emphasised that "when we are talking about children and their education, it is not good to turn some children away, especially those with disabilities" (Urban-1/T2). This was supported by a school administrator who said, "there are policies that support the education of all children and in my view it is ethically appropriate to accommodate them in our schools. But we do not have the relevant policies as yet in this school" (Rural-2/P).

4.4.2 Functional Practices for the Classroom

This study has considered the functional practices that were actually going on at the school level as part of the school culture. 'Changing school practices' is a major theme that emerged from the data coding, categorisation and analysis process. Under this major theme, 'school contextual practices for learning', and 'teacher education and experiences' emerged. Under the first theme, 'school curriculum in use', 'instructional strategies' and 'assessment strategies and practices' were identified. The second theme was composed

of 'teacher education and professional development' and 'attitudes towards children with disabilities'. This section will provide an explanation and support for these themes.

4.4.2.1 School contextual practices for learning

Considering the concepts coincided with special and inclusive education, the school context played a major part in terms of fostering learning for children with disabilities. The interview and observation data showed evidence of context bound patterns that emerged. While there were some differences, one of the major influences of the school contexts during the time of the study was the introduction of an outcomes -based education curriculum as part of the wider education reform in PNG. While contextual practices were geared towards achieving the outcomes-based curriculum objectives, the inclusion of children with disabilities in the outcomes-based education process was perceived personally by different respondents who took part in the study. The school curriculum was one domain that the respondents placed particular emphasis on in the schools that took part in the study.

School Curriculum in use. Most staff revealed that they were using the outcomes-based education curriculum in all the four schools under study. They said that the outcomes-based curriculum focused on seven learning areas or subjects, which must be achieved in each grade level. According to Rural-1/T2, "the seven curriculum learning areas include: science, mathematics, language, social science, personal development, making a living, and arts." All grades (i.e., grade three to eight) had their own curriculum which included two documents; a syllabus and a teachers' guide. When teaching, the teachers entirely depended on these two documents. As Urban-1/T1 explained, "all the grades have their own syllabus and a teachers' guide and teachers must do more research to develop the programmes and lessons by themselves." In the view of some teachers and school administrators, the outcomes-based curriculum was relevant as it prepared all children to be given chances either to go through the education system for further studies or get settled back in the village context with the help of the skills based curriculum offerings. The following remarks were made by teachers about the outcomes-based curriculum:

The outcomes-based curriculum is good as it is flexible. It concentrates on the students' academic areas as well as life skills to settle in the society. They can use these either in the village or when they go for further studies. Students are really interested both in and outside classroom activities. (Urban-1/T2)

The outcomes-based education curriculum is doing justice to the students in their learning because students can decide whether to go for further studies or to settle back in the village. Either way, no one is missing out because both academic and life skills for basic living are provided for all students. For instance, as well as teaching mathematics and science content, we also teach how to build a decent house or do book keeping for village trade store business. (Rural-1/T3)

A school administrator also expressed similar views on the outcomes-based education curriculum and said:

Our school is now implementing the outcomes-based education curriculum which I think is good for the students. For too long we were hooked into the old traditional exam driven curriculum whereby there was not much flexibility in teaching and students who did not make it through the exams were regarded as failures and they had to go back to the villages with academic skills which appeared to be irrelevant and useless at the village level. Through the outcomes-based education it's a different story as students are equipped both academically and practically. If they cannot pass the exams, then they can also take the life skills back to the village and become resource people. (Rural-2/P)

Whilst most teachers hailed the outcomes-based education curriculum, others cast their doubts on it as well. Some even expressed doubts over the achievement of the outcomes-based education objectives due to several reasons. Firstly, there was no staff training on how to implement the outcomes-based curriculum to start with. As one teacher vehemently stated, "they brought in the outcomes-based curriculum but I don't have enough ideas on how to really implement it as we were not trained well through studies or in-services" (Urban-2/T2). Another teacher expressed that "from the start I cast my doubts on the outcomes-based curriculum because they confused us and we did not know what to do" (Rural-1/T2).

Secondly, the curriculum content was superficial whereby teachers were only guided with aims and objectives and there were no sample activities for teachers to rely on to develop further class activities like the old curriculum. This placed a huge burden on the teachers to do further investigation and preparation. Some teachers were confused by the kind of activities to target individual students' learning needs like for those with disabilities, simply because they did not have the repertoire of necessary skills. As one teacher stated, "the outcomes-based curriculum expects me to do more so I have no time to prepare to meet individual students' learning needs like those with disabilities and also I haven't learnt anything about that" (Urban-1/T2). The third reason provided was that the work load for the teachers was too heavy. Due to lack of perceived curriculum content, teachers were expected to develop and expand the curriculum aims and objectives further through their own research and appropriate student based activities. It appeared that there was a lack of support curriculum documents like students' resources and activity books. This information was commented on where a teacher stated, "we really can't do much using the two documents alone as there are no students' activities and it is too much work for us" (Rural-2/T1).

A school administrator also expressed his views and showed the confusion and differences he felt about what the outcomes-based curriculum had caused when he made a statement such as:

> The outcomes-based is quite relevant to our local needs as we also allow community participation. The curriculum is both within and outside of the classroom based. This is good but to me the content is superficial and many of my teachers are finding it difficult and thus some are resorting to the old curriculum activities. We also have the grade eight exams coming up and we want the students to pass that as well. So the implementation part of the outcomes-based curriculum is creating confusion among the teachers. (Urban-2/P)

Hence, this shows that although the intent of the outcomes-based education was relevant to meeting local needs, the basic knowledge to prepare and implement such a new educational practice was lacking. This means that the outcomes-based curriculum needed to be viewed as a user-friendly education strategy for the staff and the learners as a

whole. Also, curriculum differentiation to meet specific learning needs of children with disabilities was lacking as the teachers and school administrators were not informed adequately prior to the actual implementation of the outcomes-based curriculum. As one teacher stated, "we were not prepared well to implement this curriculum and some of us are finding it difficult. Maybe for the new graduates it is 'ok' because they got some training at the college" (Rural-2/T2). An observation conducted in this particular teacher's classroom revealed that the teacher minimally considered individual student learning needs when moving from one lesson to another (Rural-2/T2).

Instructional Strategies. From the interview and observation 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 in the way graduate teachers and experienced teachers employed various teaching strategies, all teachers appeared to focus on the academic content and the practical skills aspects of the outcomes- based education curriculum. A graduate teacher for example stated that "I am using different types of instructional strategies when teaching depending on what I am teaching, whether content based subject like science or a practical skills project like making a fence" (Rural-1/T2).   Most graduate teachers stated that they were using many of the skills such as peer tutoring, where same age children were used to teach each other either in pairs or in groups. Another graduate 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" (Urban-2/T3). When observed in the classroom, this particular teacher was able to use three instructional strategies consecutively such as: whole class teaching, peer tutoring on a topic, and individual child responses in the form of question and answer strategy.

On the other hand, the experienced teachers' approach in the classroom was little different from what the graduate teachers were doing. Nearly all the experienced teachers expressed that they were under immense pressure when implementing the outcomes-based education curriculum. Two of these teachers commented how they used their experiences in the classroom in this way:

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. (Urban-2/T3)

Though I have been teaching for more that 15 years, five years in this school, I have never been exposed to in-service courses. But I still try my best to use different teaching strategies like group projects, home work, and individual assignments in class. But the outcomes-based education is making things difficult for me. The children with learning problems is a difficult area for me too. (Urban-1/T1)

Nevertheless, nearly all the respondents said that the outcomes-based education was so demanding and they had to use different instructional strategies when teaching. One teacher for instance mentioned that "I try to use different teaching strategies such as peer tutoring, mind mapping, cooperative teaching, project work and I also allow children with disabilities to take part" (Rural-2/T1). However, most teachers mentioned that when they used one teaching strategy and when students don't catch up, they could repeat the same lesson another time until the desired outcome was achieved. That suggested that there was flexibility when teaching the outcomes-based curriculum in the schools. Urban-2/T2 supported this and said that "when my students cannot catch up with the lesson that I teach now, I can still teach the same lesson the following day or maybe later and that is what we are doing in the reform curriculum." Apart from the other three schools, only one of the urban schools, Urban-1, was supported by the Callan Service Resource Centre based in Mendi town in terms of inclusive education teaching strategies. Teachers from the other three schools were either depending on their prior learning or teaching experiences.

All the teachers who took part in the study stated that the use of parents, other relatives and significant others in the school or the community was also working well. One teacher commented that "in the outcomes-based curriculum, we have been inviting parents or other adults in the community to explain some topics that are related to the traditional culture to the students as most of us teachers don't know much about the culture" (Rural-1/T3). Another teacher commented that "students learn much through

actual demonstrations from their parents or relatives or other elders in the community"
(Urban-2/T1). Some teachers also said that students become excited and cooperate well
with the village elders when they come for presentations as a form of respect for their
cultural leaders and their associated values. As one teacher stated, "when the village
elders come around to talk on topics when I invite them in my classroom, all the students
are quiet and listen attentively as a show of respect for the elders and our culture" (Rural-
2/T1).

Assessment Strategies and Practices. The interview and observation data suggested
that assessment was a vital component of the outcomes-based education. It appeared that
all teachers and school administrators considered assessment to be one of those practices
that must underpin the whole education process. For instance, Rural-2/T3 explained that
"in our school we consider assessment as the central part in teaching and learning as it is
through assessment that we find out about our students' learning." However, there was a
marked difference in the way the different respondents viewed the assessment component
in the four schools, particularly the experienced teachers, graduate teachers, and the
school administrators. The data revealed a major shift in the way assessment was
perceived and executed from the traditional rigid ways of assessing students' learning to
an ecological based assessment. This was due to the outcomes-based curriculum being
introduced in the four schools.

Most graduate teachers who took part in the study stated that they ensured that the
students' learning was assessed frequently on a daily basis. In other words, assessment
was a continuous endeavor together with teaching. As one graduate teacher stated,
"when I teach a unit or a topic, I give the students a short quiz to find out their learning
progress" (Rural-2/T3). The same teacher commented that "in the college we were told
to assess all students in regards to their performance of everything that is around the
child" (Rural-2/3). Most graduate teachers saw assessment as a continuous process so
long as there was some form of teaching going on. One teacher supported this and said,
"I just started teaching this year and I have developed students' individual portfolios to
keep all their records and everything that they are doing is assessed" (Urban-2/T2).

Nevertheless, workload was an issue that was raised by this group of teachers. As one teacher expressed, "the current assessment is good, but we have too much work to do. We are under pressure to have the marks presented to the Assessment Coordinator as soon as possible but I have not completed it yet" (Urban-2/T2).

At the same time the experienced teachers viewed that there was a huge shift in the way students' learning was evaluated and this was gained from their experiences over time. Nearly all the experienced teachers expressed that before the introduction of the outcomes-based education, they were only using classroom based end of term tests and assignments as a form of assessing students' learning. As one teacher who had been teaching for the past 23 years remarked:

> When you are talking about assessment, it is every day thing. When we teach a certain topic or unit, we have to assess the students through a short test or quiz. Or we give them projects on the topic and we assess that. Other times we take the students out to the gardens and assess them on what they are doing and the outcomes. For example, if I teach them on how to make a garden, then I have to take them out to the garden and find out what they have done, like mulching, drainage, the cabbages they produce and so on. So we concentrate on academic content as well as the practical skills and outcomes. (Rural-1/T1)

Another experienced teacher commented on assessment in this way:

> Assessment is done everyday and after every unit or topic. In my class I have a portfolio for every student. Whatever they do, whether it is a class exercise, class tests, group work projects, or taking the children out to the field for games, I have to watch each one of them carefully and write comments. When I come back to the classroom I make a report about each child and put them in the child's own portfolio. It is really good because we are assessing the children on everything; whether academic, social skills or even behavior and attitudes. (Urban-2/T2)

From their teaching experiences, the experienced teachers were able to make distinctions in terms of their previous assessment practices and the one they were using at the time of the study in relation to the outcomes-based education. Nearly all the experienced teachers expressed satisfaction on how they were assessing the students' learning. One teacher for instance mentioned that "I am quite happy with this assessment because those

students who are not good at academic work are doing well in the practical skills" (Rural-2/T1). The teachers had a view that all students could be educated depending on their interests and what they could do and what they could not do. There was an expression of contentment whereby most teachers had confidence in those students who would go back to the village to be productive citizens by making use of the village based life skills. Nevertheless, it was noted that when the interviewees were talking about assessment, they were not pertaining only to children with disabilities but all children in the classroom.

From the perspective of the school administrators, it was seen that the assessment that was used in the schools was relevant and appropriate for the students and the community at large. Most school administrators expressed satisfaction that the outcomes-based education assessment practices considered everything around a child. One school administrator stated, "I am so happy with the current assessment because everything a child does is noted and assessed" (Rural-2/P). Another school administrator supported that "in our assessment we look into everything the child does in and outside of the classroom and we assess them and make reports accordingly" (Urban-2/P). However, during follow-up interviews, some school administrators revealed that there was considerable pressure for them to complete the assessment to be sent to the National Department of Education for the collation of the cumulative grades. As one deputy principal reported, "I pressure my teachers to complete the assessments on time but they are taking so much time. Maybe because they have so much workload to attend to" (Rural-1/DP). This had impacted on meeting the deadlines set by the National Department of Education.

Classroom management and organisation. The success of inclusive education was partly determined by the respondents' ability to categorise students according to their achievements from inside and outside of the regular classrooms. The way the classrooms were organised played some part for the full inclusion of students with disabilities in the schools under study along with their normal peers. The interview and observation data revealed differing views about the practices in the schools under study. 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" (Rural-2/T2). However, in all the four schools that took part in the study, most teachers and school administrators reported overcrowded classrooms, far above the PNG National Department of Education's required number of between 32-35 students for each class. This had impacted on the ability of the teachers to adequately support students with disabilities, especially those with learning and behavior 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 behavior problems. But, I also must acknowledge that we also have overcrowded classrooms. The National Department of Education requires us to have 32-35 students in a class but in my class I had 46 students. This was too many students but I had no choice as the school principal told us to enrol all the children as these were students displaced by the tribal fights in the area. Some students eventually left school and now I have 36 which is still a lot to teach. (Urban-2/T2)

> I had 38 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 24 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. (Rural-1/T1)

Many teachers added another aspect to classroom placement and that is attendance. In other words, absenteeism and retention played a major part when making decisions to place students in the classroom and the general classroom organisation. Some students who were falling behind or finding it difficult were often missing school. As one teacher stated, "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" (Urban-1/T2). A classroom observation in this particular teacher's class also revealed that the particular child in question was so quiet and did not contribute anything in a group activity (Urban-1). Another teacher commented that "some students who find it difficult in class are the ones who are absent from class and give all sorts of reasons" (Rural-2/T2).

Most participants revealed that as a remedy different forms of punishment were used in the classroom and the school at large. While some teachers expressed the use of negative forms of punishment, others said that they used some positive means to deter students from making the same mistake. As one teacher stated, "when I see that students are absent from school, I tell them to bring some posts for the model house for our practical lessons" (Rural-2/T2). Another teacher remarked that "when students don't listen to me and follow instructions, they are put off the lesson and told to watch others, like when playing basketball in a sports lesson" (Rural-2/T2). In so doing, it made them realise their mistakes and thus learn from that experience. This teacher stated that same kind of treatment was applied to both students with disabilities and the normal students.

4.4.2.2 Teacher Education and Experiences

It was evident that the respondents' education, training and preparedness, and experiences played some part in the way children with disabilities were viewed and this reflected on their inclusion into the regular classrooms in the schools under study. The interview and observation data revealed some differing views and experiences the respondents held. From the data it appeared that both the teachers and school administrators expressed their views in line with how they were prepared through their initial teacher training, in-service training and further study opportunities. The staff also expressed their views about their attitudes towards children with disabilities. The attitudes were developed from their experiences when the children with disabilities were included with other children in the regular schools and classrooms.

Teacher education and professional development. Most teachers and school administrators said that in order for them to implement the inclusive education and other education policies, their education and professional development should have been considered. However, the interview data suggested that teacher training and preparation was very minimal or non-existent according to some respondents. As one school administrator commented, "I have been teaching here for the past 24 years, but teacher

professional development to implement education policies is minimal" (Urban-1/P). A similar sentiment was shared by an experienced teacher who had just returned from further studies through his own personal endeavour. He stated that:

> I had been teaching for the past 15 years before I went to the University of Goroka to do my Bachelor of Education degree. No one supported me and I was put off the payroll by the National Department of Education during my study. I learnt some good things on inclusive and special education. However, opportunities for me to share these skills at the school level are not provided by the school principal and I can't do anything. (Rural-1/T3)

However, some participants had the view that despite the lack of support for further studies and in-service education opportunities for teachers, individual teachers and school administrators were conducting staff in-service training. They also went for further studies and attended workshops provided by the Curriculum Reform and Implementation Programme (CRIP), which was an agent of the Australian Aid for International Development (AusAID) as an aid package. This situation was revealed by a senior teacher who stated that "the National Department of Education is not supporting us but AusAID through CRIP is doing a good job in training us to implement the outcomes-based curriculum effectively" (Rural-2/T1). Another experienced teacher concurred with this view that "in-service training and further studies are things we have not heard of in this school and there were no opportunities, but now the CRIP people are training us on how to implement the outcomes-based curriculum. This is helping us so much" (Urban-1/T2). In the view of an experienced school administrator:

> I have been in this school for 11 years as deputy principal, but I was not sent for further studies or training on inclusive education. I only went for the senior teachers' course in Port Moresby for only three weeks. I was also not trained in this area while at the college. So you see I have no idea. Maybe the authorities are stubborn to tell us what to do. (Rural-1/DP)

At the same time, some teachers particularly those who graduated in 1994 and after had the view that they were taught some skills on how to include children with disabilities in the regular classroom. Some teachers stated that though they did not have practical experience, as the special education courses were more content based, when they came to

the school it was relevant. As one teacher stated, "I was introduced to special and inclusive education during my college training and I am trying to implement that at the school" (Urban-1/T3). Another teacher expressed a view that "I learnt about students with disabilities and their inclusion in the regular classroom when I was in the college but I can't do much at the school because the school administrators don't support that" (Rural-1/T2). However, teachers who had their teacher training prior to 1994 collectively were of the view that they were not introduced to special and inclusive education. One school administrator for example argued and stated that "those of us teachers who took training in 1990s and 1980s were not introduced to special and inclusive education skills" (Urban-1/T1). Though the participants' views expressed the need for special and inclusive education, their training through in-service training and further studies was not encouraged or supported even at the school level.

Attitudes towards children with disabilities. Teachers' and school administrators' attitudes were a major factor that appeared to influence how they viewed children with disabilities and their subsequent inclusion in the regular classrooms. In the schools under study, the interview and observation data indicated that the teachers and school administrators held differing views and attitudes which were influenced by different aspects. According to the data, some of the major attitudinal differences appeared to be associated with gender, location/proximity of the sources of support, socio-economic situation, training and competency, and experience with children who had disabilities. Gender played a part in the way teachers and school administrators perceived children with disabilities and their inclusion in the regular classrooms in Southern Highlands Province. For instance, all the teachers who were mothers and had their own children supported the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular classroom. This attitude is illustrated in the following two excerpts:

> I have four children and I feel sorry for other children when they find it difficult to learn in the classroom. So I have to try to help them out in whatever way I can so that they can learn as well like others. (Rural-1/T3)

I have my own children as well so I feel sorry for children with disabilities because they are also human beings and we must have the heart for them to be educated like other normal children. We should not allow the normal children to be educated and disregard the children with disabilities. (Urban-1/T2)

While the female teachers, especially those who had their own children had positive attitudes towards children with disabilities, they also faced difficulties in the regular classroom situation when actually teaching such children. For instance, when observing a female teacher with children in her classroom, it was seen that the teacher became aggressive at a child who had temper tantrums and she hurled a duster at the child but missed (Rural-1). At the same time the male counterparts also had the view that children with disabilities should be educated in the regular classroom. However, their responses were such that there was no real concern for the children. One teacher explained, "yes I do allow children with disabilities in my class, but when they make me angry I become cross" (Urban-2/T1). But another solution for catering for the needs of these children was suggested that "children with disabilities are in our school and sometimes they disturb the normal children. So I suggest a separate class for them in the same school" (Urban-1/P).

The location of the sources of support for the education of children with disabilities also had an impact in the way children with disabilities were perceived and included in the regular schools in SHP. For instance, teachers and school administrators who had some kind of support from the Callan Services and the hospitals stated that they were happy to be helped by these institutions. Urban-1/T3 for instance said that "with the help of Callan Services, we feel proud to include children with disabilities in our classroom because they help us with the skills we need." A school administrator supported this view and commented that "the nearby hospital is good because when I send children for medical treatment they send a report back to me and sometimes they come around to do eye tests" (Urban-2/P). However, the respondents from the rural schools felt that there was a need for support people or organisation within the vicinity of their schools so that they could be more proactive towards inclusive education. A teacher admitted hard thoughts on having "… heard that Callan Service is based in Mendi and they should come also to our

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school as we have children with disabilities, but we have not screened them as yet" (Rural-1/T2).

Staff members who had some form of training on special and inclusive education were more supportive towards the education of children with disabilities in the regular classrooms. This training influenced a teacher to comment, "I have gone through some form of training during my in-service training and I feel confident to teach children with disabilities in my class" (Urban-2/T2).   Similarly, a school administrator reported that "I took a course on disabilities when I went to the Papua New Guinea Institute of Education so I encourage children with disabilities to be educated in this school" (Rural-2/P). However, the participants who did not have any training or had exposure to the concepts of special and inclusive education before notes that they were in support for inclusive education, but felt the classroom reality was different. This ambivalence was shown by a teacher whose comments and practice were not well aligned. She gave an inclusive answer to her staff development thoughts as shown here:

> In fact I did not go through any special or inclusive education courses in my teacher training or even in workshops or in-services, but I fully support and implement it. I encourage all students to be included in my classroom and teach them together. (Rural-2/T1)

However, when this particular teacher was observed while she was teaching in the classroom, the students' specific learning needs were minimally considered and met. A classroom conversation took place between this teacher and a child with learning difficulties and it is stated below in their own words:

> *Teacher*: Why haven't you done the home work?
> *Child*: I was confused…ya…mmm…not sure.
> *Teacher*: But you were told to do it or ask someone else and you failed, idiot.
> *Researcher's note*: Child did not talk and kept quiet all time.
> *Teacher*: Your job is to stay back and sweep the floor with water after school.

This showed a situation whereby some staff members said that they were in full support of inclusive education in their schools, but in reality at the classroom level their attitudes

did not necessarily reflect what they actually expressed in words. Three quarters of the respondents stated that all children should be educated within the regular classroom. As one school administrator remarked, "my feeling is that I'd like all students to be educated in this school and I want the teachers to know about this too" (Urban-1/P). While most teachers and school administrators had the similar view for all children to be educated in the regular classroom, in practice and reality full inclusion was not supported by the respondents' actions and practices and most aspects of the school culture.

4.5   Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented the analysis of data collected from the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. Through colour coding, categorisation, and thematic analysis process, four major themes emerged. The themes include: staff understanding of special and inclusive education concepts, school cultural leadership and organisational practices, issues pertaining to the school cultural features/practices and implications for staff, and school cultural policies and practices. Under these major themes other sub-theme such as views and definitions, and school management and organisation also emerged (see Figure 4.1 at the end of this chapter). The data shows that generally the staff members held limited understanding about what constitutes special education, inclusive education and disabilities. This situation had affected their practices in the school cultural context towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms under study. However, the data shows that children with disabilities were part of the education system and they were already included in the four schools. These findings are provided in a conceptual schema as summary in the following page. The chapter that follows will discuss these findings based on the conceptual schema, the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the theoretical framework used in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Figure 4.1: School cultural features and practices conceptual schema

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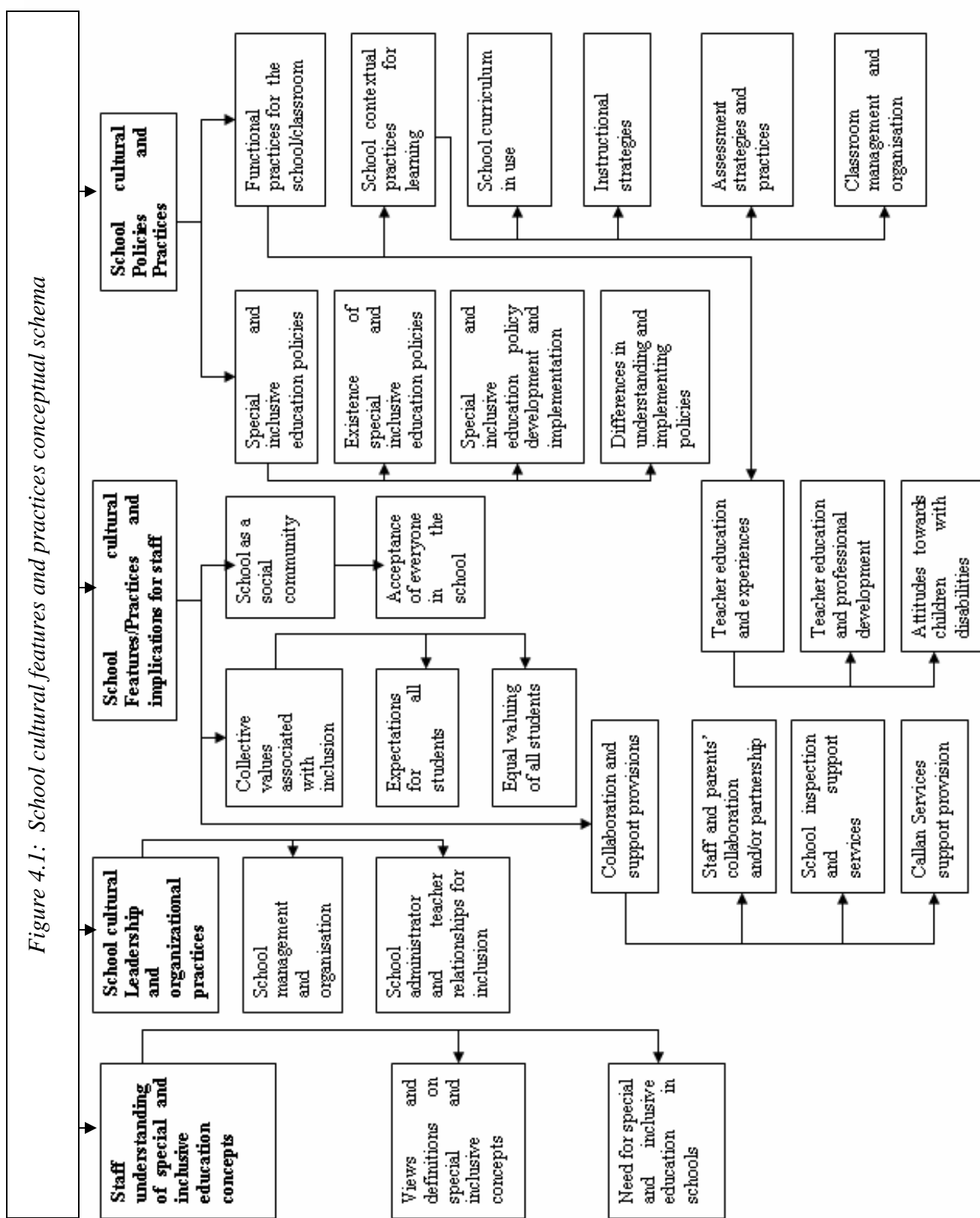
CHAPTER FIVE:
DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter discuses the findings of the data collected from the four schools in reference to the theoretical framework and literature reviewed for this study. The purpose of the study was to identify the school cultural features and practices that influenced and/or did not influence inclusive education and the impact on inclusion. In the light of the research purpose, four major themes emerged from the data analysis. Firstly, the staff understanding of special and inclusive education concepts is presented. Secondly, the school cultural leadership and organisational practices are explained. Thirdly, the school cultural features and practices and implications for staff as aspects that made up the school culture are discussed. The final section is about the school cultural policies and practices that had a bearing on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms. Each of these themes is discussed below, together with other findings derived from the literature.

5.1 Staff understanding of Special and Inclusive Education Concepts

The findings of this study revealed that teachers and school administrators held diverse personal views and understanding about what constitutes special education, inclusive education, and disabilities. Carrington (1999) in her study found that teachers' ideals and knowledge on special and inclusive education concepts influenced the way they were implementing the inclusive programmes. However, in the current study the teachers and school administrators' 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 and school administrators who had attended college training, further study opportunities, and in-service training after 1994 were able to define and explain what constitutes special and inclusive education (Panda, 1999; Vaughn et al.,

1996). This was because 1994 was the year when the teachers who took courses in special education graduated and also is the year when the 'National Special Education and Policy Guidelines' that was developed and approved by the government of PNG in 1993 was implemented in Primary Teachers' Colleges as part of the teacher training programmes.

Trained staff members. Most teachers and school administrators who had attended special and inclusive education training were able to understand the concepts from a 'whole school approach', where all children were brought together in the same school/classroom and taught. From an ecological systems perspective, the school context and the child that evolves within the microsystem are seen to be inseparable (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989, 1993; Thomas, 2005). Thus, Mentis, Quinn and Ryba (2005) argued that training is an important aspect and it can promote inclusive education in the microsystem. In the current study, however, it seems that although the teachers and school administrators had gone through some form of training in special and inclusive education, the implementation part at the school and classroom level was lacking. This group of teachers and school administrators became part of the teaching community and their knowledge and skills were 'enveloped' with that held by the other staff members of the school microsystem. One reason was that there was lack of continuity through staff development programmes, whether at the school microsystem level, provincial, or national level as the wider macrosystem (Beh-Pajooh, 1992; Shimman, 1990). According to Ceci, Baker-Sennett and Bronfenbrenner (1994), the individual person and the context can influence each other. Another reason was because the school leadership was not proactive towards fostering inclusion (Chazan, 1994). Teachers and school administrators 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).

Untrained staff members. Conversely, teachers and school administrators who had little or no knowledge about special and 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 and professional development were minimal, or in most cases, non-existent. Due to the teachers' and school administrators' lack of understanding on the basic concepts of special and inclusive education, they appeared less able to cater for the specific needs of children with disabilities in the regular schools/classrooms (Taylor, Richards, Goldtsein & Schilit, 1997). For instance, when an experienced teacher (Rural-2/T2) was seen in action in the classroom, he minimally met the learning needs of the individual children with disabilities through his instructional strategies and practices. This situation was revealed due to non-understanding of what constitutes special and inclusive education concepts and the different forms of disability conditions. From the ecological systems perspective, this inaction had negative reciprocal influences on the subsequent layer-like configuration of structures such as the mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Baltes et al., 2006; Magnusson & Stattin, 2006; Thomas, 2005). Taylor et al. (1997) therefore strongly argued that in order for inclusive education to be successful, teachers should be trained on 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' and school administrators' actions and practices were not geared towards meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities in the regular schools.

Conceptions of special education, inclusive education, and disabilities. It was found that teachers and school administrators conceived special education, inclusive education, and disabilities from different perspectives. The interviewees appeared to show a marked

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gender disparity in their understanding of the concepts. That means whilst the female teachers conceived children with disabilities from the perspective of their own children and how they were treated and included in the regular classrooms (Aksamit, Morris & Leunberger, 1987; Einchinger, Rizzo & Sirotnik, 1991; Thomas, 1985), the male teachers defined the concepts in terms of impairments (Fulcher, 1989). Oliver (1990) found that when disabilities are defined and assumed as being real, the consequences associated with actions and practices would be real and meaningful. Therefore, the perceptions held by the teachers and school administrators relative to their gender seemed to have a bearing on their practices. The outcome was the female teachers appeared to be more tolerant and sympathetic which is along the charity discourse where children with disabilities are viewed as objects of pity (Fulcher, 1989).

On the other hand, most male teachers either blamed the child or the parents for the difficulties the children were facing in the school/classroom contexts which was perceived along the medical discourse (Fulcher, 1989; Hall, 1997) or deficit model (Gindis, 2003; O'Brian & Ryba, 2005). Other staff members also conceived the concepts along the lines of tribal conflicts (Mapsea, 2006), poverty and socio-economic status experienced in the contexts under study (Stakes, 1988). However, these were not definitions but were the causes of different forms of disabilities and difficulties faced by the children. That meant generally the teachers and school administrators were not able to properly define and interpret what constituted special and inclusive education concepts. This lack of understanding had impacted on their practices whereby the needs of children with disabilities were minimally or not met in the regular schools under study. According to Aloia, Maxwell and Aloia (1981), the ineffectiveness of inclusive practices may be due to lack of training and personal experience with disabilities. However, according to the results of the study, all the teachers and school administrators expressed the need to promote special and inclusive education practices in the regular schools.

5.2 School Cultural Leadership and Organisational Practices

This study indicated that the school administrators saw themselves as leaders with authority in school cultural contexts. School administrators played a vital role in the schools in terms of discharging their leadership roles (Stoll & Fink, 1996). However, at the same time greater demand was placed on the school administrators in terms of school organisation, re-organisation, leading the staff, student discipline and the education reform. One of the three aspects of the microsystem in the ecological systems theory are 'roles' (Thomas, 2005). According to Thomas these are actions and practices performed by people holding responsible leadership positions such as teachers and school administrators. Therefore, other authors have recognised leadership as a fundamental condition for school improvement (Stoll & Fink, 1996; D. Hargreaves & Hopkins, 2005). It was evident that due to the education reform that was introduced at the wider macrosystem in PNG during the time of the study, school administrators saw changes and demands in terms of their roles in the schools. School administrators were not only seen as leaders to lead others, but were perceived as bureaucrats with power and influence. Sergiovanni (2001) describes this kind of leadership as symbolic, lacking in the substance and value as a precursor for school improvement and development, which might have positive effect on the different configurations of the ecological systems levels. In the current study, in the process of discharging their leadership roles, the school administrators played a vital role by providing leadership and management of the schools as social communities. However, the study suggested that the concepts of special and inclusive were not adequately understood and this had negatively impacted on their roles and practices in all the four schools. That meant there was a lack of appropriate leadership direction and influence to promote inclusive education practices in the schools (Carrinton, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2001).

School management and organisation. In terms of school management and organisation, the school administrators were overly obsessed with their professional responsibilities. This was because they saw their roles as being influenced by their duty statements which were formulated by the National Department of Education (NDOE) in

Port Moresby and imposed on them. Due to the rigid nature of their duty statements, there was less flexibility in the way the school administrators executed their professional duties at the school level. It appeared that the school administrators were more focused on their inspections as this determined their job continuity on their substantive positions, promotion, demotion and for salary increment. They viewed and executed their professional duties along their duty statement terms as their inspection reports would be based on how well they had executed their duties in line with their specific duty statements. It was revealed that in the process of concentrating their attention on their inspections, the school administrators did not consider how they could effectively include children with disabilities in the regular schools. That meant during their school leadership and management practices, the school administrators appeared to make little changes to the school culture to accommodate the learning needs of children with disabilities (Gartner, 1996). The main reason was because their duty statements did not make a mention of how they could accommodate the learning needs of children with disabilities in the regular schools.

The study also suggested that nearly all the school administrators in the four schools had little or no knowledge, training or experience to cater for the needs of children with disabilities. Due to their lack of understanding of the different forms of disabilities and the special and inclusive education concepts, the school environment was not made conducive to support their learning needs. Hence, the school administrators' practices were executed along the 'school-wide approach' where children were generally considered and taught in the regular schools. That meant the school leadership, management and organisational practices did not support an inclusive school culture. The visionary leadership characteristics advocated by Deal and Peterson (1999) and Pijl, Meijer and Hargarty (1997) seemed to be missing in the four schools. This was evident in the non-existence of vision, mission, and school based policy statements in the four schools. According to Villa and Thousand (1995), having clearly spelled out a vision statement helps to foster successful inclusive practices, but this document was non-existent. However, the school administrators were aware of the children with disabilities being enrolled in their schools. They also endeavored to enrol children with disabilities

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in their schools, but there was lack of support features and practices towards full inclusion from the leadership perspective.

The study further seemed that the school administrators claimed to accept children with disabilities into their schools. It revealed that children with disabilities were already in the regular schools under study. However, the acceptance of children with disabilities into their schools was out of personal love, sympathy and compassion. This was based on the charity discourse (Fulcher, 1989) and children with disabilities were rendered service for reasons pertaining to empathy and compassion (Webb-Hendy, 1995). Nevertheless, the school administrators did not have any set criteria or programme to cater for the needs of children with disabilities in the regular schools. There was a culture of blame on the parents or the extended family members for not doing enough to meet the needs of children with disabilities. The school administrators considered themselves as support people for learning in the school contexts. The culture of blame was evident when the staff members from Urban-2, Rural-1 and Rural-2 stated that the Callan Service based in Mendi was not doing enough for their in-service training and other staff development programmes to include children with disabilities and to meet their specific needs in the regular classrooms. Most school administrators also considered that the disabling conditions and difficulties faced by the students were caused by the parents and the children themselves. This view was held along the lay discourse (Fulcher, 1989; Webb-Hendy, 1995). The respondents viewed that parents were doing little for the education of children with disabilities in the regular schools.

School administrator and teacher relationships. A vital aspect pointed out in the study was the relationship between the school administrators and the classroom teachers. From the perspective of the school administrators, teachers were considered as staff there to teach and discharge their professional duties according to their duty statements and positions. That meant the school administrators were detached from the teachers and their practices at the classroom level. Hence, the principle of skilled communicator as one of the leadership characteristics of an effective inclusive school was missing (D. Hargreaves et al., 2005). However, there was an absence of 'interpersonal relations' as

the third fundamental characteristics at the microsystems level of the ecological systems structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1975, 1989, 1993; Tudge, Gray & Hogan, 1997). At the same time, with the introduction of the school administrators being regarded as inspectors in line with the education reform, they considered themselves as education officers with power, force, influence, and could direct the teachers in what to do. There was an existence of school administrator superiority culture over the teachers and their professional responsibilities. In this kind of school culture, the school administrators acted like 'bosses' with power and influence (Sergiovanni, 2001). Again, this meant the school administrators ensured teachers worked within their specific duty statements as their inspections would be done in line with their duty statements. This was an evident of coercive leadership whereby changes for improvement were minimally encouraged (Harris, 1992; Marshall, 1988). In so doing, the study revealed that the needs of children with disabilities appeared to be neglected through the school administrator's actions and practices.

From the perspective of the teachers, the school administrators were viewed as authority figures who could make decisions which would affect them positively or negatively (Marshall, 1988). All the teachers therefore endeavoured to build positive relationships with the school administrators. The main reason behind this action was for the teachers own benefit in terms of getting positive inspection reports which would determine their promotions, salary increments and forced transfer from one school to another. In the process of power relations for the purpose of benefits, the vital role of executing their professional responsibilities to include children with disabilities in the regular schools was lacking. This situation was also reflected on the minimal help and support teachers received from the school administrators. That means there were little support provisions rendered by the school administrators for the teachers to effectively discharge their professional duties to include children with disabilities in the regular schools under study. That meant the interpersonal relationships at the microsystems level from the ecological system perspective was missing (Peck et al., 1992; Thomas, 2005). Center and Ward (1987) reported that teachers were more supportive of inclusive practices when they received adequate support from their head teachers. Webb-Hendy (1995) identified that

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school cultures were making changes and inclusive practices were evident when proper leadership decisions were made and teachers were shown to be responsible for inclusion on a personal basis. However, in the current study the kind of support and help received depended on several perspectives; Christian, non-Christian, male or female school administrators. For instance, the Christian female school administrators, particularly from the church agency schools, were viewed to be more approachable and had more concern for the education of children with disabilities in the regular schools than those who came from the government school. This was a moral decision to do the right thing based on their personal convictions as well as their church doctrines and beliefs.

5.3 School Cultural Features and Practices, and Implications for Staff

Acceptance of everyone in the school. This research appeared that the schools were considered as social institutions where all children were accepted. That meant children with disabilities were already part of the school microsystem and there was limited rejection, except for those children who were difficult to be included, like those with severe developmental disorders. However, according to the literature what was happening in the four schools was not full inclusion, but rather was 'functional mainstreaming' which is one of the three forms of mainstreaming identified in the Warnock Report in the UK (Department of Education, 1988; Webb-Hendy, 1995) (see section 2.1.2). The vital aspect that was missing in the four schools was the knowledge and 'know-how' to meet the specific needs of the individual children in terms of curriculum differentiation, specific teaching strategies, appropriate assessment practices, and alteration or adaptation of the school environment (Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). According to the results, most teachers and school administrators were attempting to be proactive towards promoting special and inclusive education in their schools. However, together with other research findings they lacked appropriate training and leadership direction to foster special and inclusive education practices (Center et al., 1987; Dickens-Smith, 1995; O'Brian & Ryba, 2005).

The study further indicated that though all children were enrolled at the schools under study, children were perceived to be detached from the teachers and school

administrators. That meant children's learning needs and abilities were minimally considered and hence, the teachers and school administrators practices were not focused on individual children's learning needs. In the process of discharging their professional duties, there was evidence of school administrators' superiority over the teachers and teachers' superiority over the children. However, the acceptance of all children into the regular 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 regular schools under study. UNESCO (1994), an organisation of which PNG is a member also advocates that all children have basic human rights to education and thus have to be recognised by giving equal educational opportunities in the regular school and classroom.

However, the degree of acceptance of every child in the four schools was based on individual staff members. As stated above, while most staff members accepted all children into the regular classrooms based on 'rights' (Department of Education, 2002a), others accepted all children based on personal 'sympathy and compassion' (Fulcher, 1989). These actions showed that the real need to include all children based on educational needs was lacking, but the inclusion of all children in the regular schools was based on the staff members' personal convictions. For instance, others accepted all children based on masculinity/femininity and/or motherhood/fatherhood experiences. While staff members who were single did not have any moral or parental obligations, staff members who were parents in all the four schools included all children in their schools out of their personal love and compassion as parents. Also, all the female staff members expressed concern for the difficulties faced by all children. Other studies have reported that female teachers had greater tolerance level towards inclusive practices compared to their male colleagues (Aksamit, Morris & Leunberger, 1987; Einchinger, Rizzo & Sirotnik, 1991; Thomas, 1985). Therefore, the female staff allowed children with disabilities to be included in their classrooms where they endeavored to help them in the teaching and learning process. Other staff members accepted all children from the

religious perspective. Staff members who came from the church agency schools revealed that children were considered as Christ's image and they accepted them into the regular schools. That meant the staff members were obliged to accept and teach all children in the regular schools under study. However, this action was also based on the principles of 'rights' and 'equality'. At the same time the underlying assumption on the acceptance of children was because they considered it as their moral duty to accept all children as Christians and as part of upholding their church doctrines.

The study also suggested that staff members who came from Urban-1 were more supportive and proactive towards including children with disabilities in their classrooms. This group of staff members had the view that they were confident to make changes to their teaching approaches, assessment practices and classroom organisation to accommodate the learning needs of children with disabilities. This meant making changes to 'how they did things' in their classroom and school as a whole. The influential factor that underpinned this practice was the Callan Services Resource Centre that was established within the vicinity of the school. This resource centre played an important role in teacher in-service training on how to include children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms. Therefore, it was influential in promoting and enhancing teachers' inclusive practices in Urban-1. Other scholars have also reported that when regular teachers and their practices are supported by special education resource specialists, their level of confidence to include children with disabilities in the regular classrooms also increased (Clough & Corbett, 2000; Gargiulo, 2003; Kauffaman, Lloyd & McGee, 1989). With the in-service training and support the staff members in Urban-1 received from the Callan Services Resource Centre, they felt confident to teach children with disabilities in their classrooms. Jenney, Snell, Beers and Raynes (1995) and Clough and Lindsay (1991) also found that when specialists and special education teachers become co-workers of regular classroom teachers, their confidence increases and they are more positive about inclusion. Thus, the need to attain support from the Callan Services Resource Centre was also expressed by staff members in the other three schools. This seemed that the work of Callan Services as a support agency was considered invaluable and thus needed by all staff members in all the four schools under study. However, in

reality the support from Callan Services appeared to be not extended to the other three schools.

Expectations for all students. It was revealed that the teachers and school administrators in the four schools in Southern Highlands Province held differing expectations for all students. As well as acknowledging the values associated with inclusion which was already a practice in their schools, most staff members perceived the education of children with disabilities in the form of separate curriculum and other assistive tools like Braille. Also they expected children with disabilities to be educated in institutions like the Callan Service Resource Centre in Mendi. They considered that having separate institutions would meet the specific needs of children with disabilities. These views were held along the lay discourse, which are based on 'myths and stereotypes' (Fulcher, 1989; Webb-Hendy, 1995). According to Ballard (198), this can be evident in the attitudes held towards children with disabilities in regular schools. Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1989, 1993) and Thomas (2005) also revealed from the ecological system theory that the development of a child depends on what is done, how things are done, the relationships and interaction that exists between the child and the capable adults. Nonetheless, the basic question that could be posed in this analysis was; 'why did the staff members enrol the children 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 lack of appropriate support provisions in the schools (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; 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.

With the introduction of the outcomes-based education, the study pointed out two expectations held by the staff members. The first expectation was to teach children so that they could pass the exams and proceed to high school and eventually to tertiary institutions. This was an 'academic pathway' whereby the outcomes-based curriculum had the potential to promote students' learning (Department of Education, 2002b&c).

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The second expectation the staff members held was based on the practical or basic life skills. This was the 'practical pathway' and the expectation was that most staff members thought that children who were unsuccessful in the academic subjects would benefit from the practical subjects and/or skills. The basic life skills were subjects that would be useful when the students return to the village and community level such as basic building, book-keeping, and cooking. However, in both of these aspects of the school culture, the needs of children with disabilities were minimally met or neglected in most cases. The staff members minimally realised the potential these two aspects of the school culture had in order to meet the needs of children with difficulties in learning as well as those with other forms of disabilities. Consequently, the staff members' practices and expectations were geared towards the 'whole schools' approach', rather than meeting the individual students' learning needs and disabilities. However, it can be argued that outcomes-based education curriculum appeared to have the potential to promote inclusive education as the intention was to meet all children's learning needs both in academic as well as practical life skills.

Equal valuing of all students. The study revealed that equal valuing of all children was a practice that was already in existence in the four schools. The teachers and school administrators considered that all children had to be respected, valued and educated in the regular schools and classrooms. However, this was not a "zero reject model" (Zionts, 2005, p. 7) as some children who were not able to be accommodated in the regular schools and classrooms were still allowed to attend special schools like the Callan Services Resource Centre located in Mendi. However, the study revealed three vital considerations in terms of valuing all children in the four schools. Firstly, from the church perspective, staff members who came from the church schools and who were Christians viewed 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 Church teaching principles and doctrines where everyone was loved and treated equally. Secondly, teachers who came from the government run schools 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 considered to be at fault always and the teachers' own shortcomings and weaknesses were not acknowledged. There was a certain degree of blame from the staff members 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 four schools (Foreman, 2005; Fulcher, 1989). Thirdly, it was suggested that there was a bias in the decisions that teachers and school administrators made when valuing and relating to children. This practice inferred a 'societal worldview' whereby the study suggested that staff members exhibited a certain degree of bias and nepotism when relating to children. For instance, children who came from the staff members' village, community or had relatives were treated more positively compared those who came from other areas. This practice also appeared to have negative impact in the way children with disabilities were treated and given learning opportunities in the four schools. One of the reasons for this action was because children who came from the same area or who were related to the staff member(s) listened to them more than those children who came from other areas or were non-relatives.

Collaboration and support provisions. School support and collaborative practices were identified to be in existence but were lacking in terms of effective service delivery in both urban and rural schools. Peterson and Hittie (2003) stated that collaborative and support practices are vital for effective inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular schools. While the support and services provided by the Callan Service in Mendi was acknowledged, particularly by teachers and school administrators who came from Urban-1, all the staff members who took part in the study expressed concern that the Provincial Education Division and National Department of Education were not doing enough to support them as part of their professional responsibility. The ecological systems theory, however, suggests that the array of attitudes, values, convictions and practices exhibited by the members of the wider macrosystem influence the development of children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989, 1993; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 2005). Thus, at the macrosystems level, there seemed to be lack of proper leadership, direction, curriculum materials, and professional development opportunities from the provincial and national

governments of education in order to promote special and inclusive education. At the exosystems level of the ecological system structure, other support agencies like the hospitals were also lacking professional collaboration and networking with the schools towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular schools. Kauffman, Lloyd and McGee (1989) reported that collaboration shaped positive teacher actions and practices in inclusive schools. However, the current study revealed that the staff members perceived that other agencies like the hospitals would not provide support services towards the education of children with disabilities. That meant the staff members minimally ventured out to seek advice in order for children with disabilities to succeed in the regular schools.

Staff and parents' collaboration and partnership were considered to be vital. Garliu (2003) argues that parents and teachers have to take responsibility through collaborative practices in order to foster positive learning outcomes. However, the study showed that parents only played minimal support roles, with most of their actions focused on outside classroom activities. Also, the parents' and teachers' collaboration and support were executed on voluntary basis. One reason identified is that parents and teachers did not recognise themselves as equal partners (Ministry of Education, 1999; Moltzen, 2005). Nevertheless, most staff members felt that with the introduction of the outcomes-based education, parents' contributions were invaluable. This practice was evident when the parents were asked to make presentations as part of the teaching programmes in the schools. It was also shown that in the rural schools parents did not take an active part in the learning of their children. The parents viewed the teaching and learning practices to be the responsibility of the teachers and they were only there to provide support in terms of the children's welfare. As a consequence of the parental negligence to provide needed support, the staff members in the two remote schools had used force or coercion in order to facilitate parental participation. For instance, this practice was evident when the parents who did not attend the Parents and Citizens' Meeting (PNC) were told to pay fines. This action revealed that the parents who came from the two remote schools took less responsibility in collaborating with the staff members to promote the children's learning.

The school inspectors and their support services as part of their professional roles were discharged from the exosystems level and these were considered to be an integral part of the education system in Southern Highlands Province. The study seemed that the inspectors played a vital role in terms of maintaining standards through their inspection and support practices. While teachers and schools administrators were encouraged, other times they were forced to implement the education policies and new directives or initiatives. The outcomes-based education is one of those curriculum as well as policy initiatives that was imposed on the teachers and school administrators. The study suggested that in order to meet the inspection demands, the staff members had to work extra hard in terms of discharging their professional duties. It was hinted that school inspectors were not considered as collaborative and coaching partners (Robertson, 2005), but were rather seen as education authorities who were detached from the staff members and the school culture. In order words, the school inspectors' roles were seen as education officers with power and influence so that the school staff implemented the intended curriculum and policies without reservation. D. Hargreaves et al. (2005) and Stoll et al. (1996) identified this kind of practice as power coercive leadership which could be dangerous for continuity and sustainability of the intended programmes.

The study further suggested that due to the inspectors' limited understanding of the concepts and practices associated with special and inclusive education practices, they seemed not able to collaborate with the staff members in terms of professional development programmes. It was also pointed out that the kind of assistance and support rendered by the school inspectors towards inclusive education practices appeared to be non-existent. However, the outcomes-based education has placed a considerable demand on the school inspectors for them to assess all staff members from an ecological perspective (Smith et al., 1998). In other words, inspectors were required to assess the staff members' performances by looking at both academic subjects and practical skills that they were imparting, both inside and outside the classroom contexts. In the process of rigidly executing their inspection duties, all staff members reported that the specific needs of children with disabilities were minimally considered or neglected. Most

experienced teachers in all the four schools revealed similar comments and suggested the need for the school inspectors to take into consideration the learning needs of children with disabilities as they were already enrolled and part of the school mesosystem.

5.4 School Cultural Policies and Practices

Inclusive education is about including all learners in the regular school and classroom and supported by relevant policies and practices (Mitchell, 1999). The teachers in these four schools from the Southern Highlands Province considered the importance of educating all children in the regular schools and classrooms. The concept of giving equal education opportunities was also revealed in the study. However, while the right to an education of all children was recognised and acknowledged by all the staff members in all the four schools, a gap was found to be in existence in terms of understanding what constituted special and inclusive education policies and practices. The results of the study suggested two major themes which included: 'special and inclusive education policies', and 'functional practices for the classroom'. These two school cultural practices appeared to be congruent whereby on the basis of one understanding the special and inclusive education policies, this action had impacted on the staff members' practices at the school and classroom contexts.

5.4.1 Special and Inclusive Education Policies

Existence of special and inclusive education policies. The study suggested that the staff members seemed not to be aware of the existence of special and inclusive education policies in all the four schools in Southern Highlands Province. The teachers and school administrators appeared to have little idea on whether there were already any special or inclusive education policies at the school, the Provincial Education Division, and the National Department of Education levels. The major one was the 'National Special Education Plan, Policy and Guidelines for Special Education' accepted by the PNG National Education Board in 1993 (Department of Education, 1993). This policy was then intended to be implemented beginning in 1994. In his capacity as the PNG

Education Secretary, Tetaga (1994) advised all the education institutions in PNG through a circular that the first batch of special education graduate teachers from St. Benedict's Teachers' College would commence their teaching career commencing in 1994. The special education policy was then revised after a decade of implementation in 2003 (Department of Education, 2003). This policy framework was intended to be implemented from 2004-2013. The study however, revealed that though the special and inclusive education policy was already in existence at the national level and despite the then Secretary's circular instructions to implement the policy, many of the teachers and school administrators 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. Viewing it through the ecological systems lens, Peck et al. (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 staff members who took some training on special and inclusive education, as well as those who did not. Even at the school levels, there were no special or inclusive education policy documents in existence to guide the staff members' practices.

Policy development and implementation. The study suggested that the development and implementation of the special and inclusive education policies were not well understood by the teachers and school administrators. 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 regular schools and classrooms. However, the study appeared that the vital aspect of what constitutes a special and inclusive education policy were misunderstood by the staff members. While they understood and explained policies in terms of school and classroom rules, they seemed to be not aware of how to develop such a policy. It was seen that the school and classroom rules emphasised student behaviour, relationships, and general conduct whilst in schools. These were nevertheless not special or inclusive education policies and also there was a lack of policy documents at the school level. Therefore, the staff members in all the four schools blamed the Nation Department of Education and the Provincial Education

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authorities for not making the policies available to them. They perceived that the development and implementation of special and inclusive education policies were the responsibility of the National Department of Education and the Provincial Education Division.

According to the study the staff members took special and inclusive education policies for granted and they did not take personal responsibility and ownership in developing them at the school level. Conversely, O'Brian et al. (2005) strongly recommended that schools have to develop school based policies to cater for the needs of a wide spectrum of children in inclusive schools. However, in the current study one of the major factors that attributed to the inaction was that the teachers and school administrators did not know how to develop relevant education policies. The non-existence of school based special and inclusive education policies showed that the staff members had limited or no knowledge about how to develop education policies. The study further showed that the teachers thought it was the responsibility of the school administrators whilst the school administrators shifted the responsibility on the provincial and national education authorities. There was an absence of teachers and school administrators taking responsibility in developing special and inclusive education policies. One major reason was that the school inspectors as school changing agents did not show leadership in terms of providing in-service training and direction on how to develop education policies. The inaction has amounted to the school administrators leading and directing the schools with no vision and mission statements, nor policy framework as the fundamental foundations of the schools, operating within the wider macrosystem. The long term and short term visions, underpinned by relevant education policies in the areas of special and inclusive education for the schools were lacking.

Differences in understanding and implementing policies. In the absence of special and inclusive education policies in the four schools, some differences in understanding and implementing education policies were identified in the study. According to the results of the study, the teachers and school administrators understood special and inclusive education policies from two perspectives. Firstly, some staff members

understood special and inclusive education policies from the perspective of 'human rights' and 'rights to education'. Special and inclusive education policies have to develop policies to foster the accommodation of all children regardless of their disabilities, race, gender and other disparities (Mentis et al., 2005; Mitchell, 1999). Therefore, the staff members reported that they had accepted all children into their schools and classrooms because it was their right to go to school and get formal education. Though the staff members appeared to be not aware of the existence of any special or 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. Secondly, the teachers and school administrators understood the education policies from professional and moral perspectives. This group of staff members perceived that the acceptance and education of all children was their noble responsibility as part of their professional and moral duties. They perceived that teachers, particularly from the primary school level were thought to be caregivers of children and thus they had to be 'just' to allow all children to attend their schools and classrooms. 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' and school administrators' practices and actions supported providing education opportunities to all children in the regular schools.

5.4.2 Functional Practices for the Classroom

School curriculum in use. The study has suggested the school curriculum to be one of the functional practices within the school culture. Several authors have advocated the need for functional and applied curriculum towards fostering academic, vocational and life skills in inclusive classrooms (Connell, 2004; Mitchell, 1999; Peterson, LeyRoy, Field & Wood, 1992). This is to ensure curriculum developed and implemented is learner centered. In the current study, a context bound influence towards the school

practices was the introduction of the outcomes-based education curriculum in all the four schools in Southern Highlands Province. It was found that the schools had deviated from the traditional curriculum (Taylor et al., 1997), which had been behaviourist and took a rigid approach to the outcomes-based education curriculum (Department of Education, 2002a,b&c). This was in line with the education reform that was introduced in Papua New Guinea (Department of Education, 2002a). Most staff members stated that the outcomes-based education curriculum was based on an ecological perspective. From the ecological systems theory, human behaviour emanates from the function of the human person and the degree of interaction within the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989, 1993; Damon & Lerner, 2006). The assimilation of the curriculum content and skills is the manifestation of this interaction that exists between the learner, the staff member and the school context. That meant the focus of the outcomes-based education curriculum was on the academic subjects as well as the practical skill pathways. However, whilst the staff members reported confidence in meeting the learning needs of all children through the application of the outcomes-based curriculum, the materials/documents and content appeared to be limited. The staff members depended on two documents; a syllabus and a teachers' guide. The study suggested that these curriculum documents were inadequate in content and the necessary pedagogical skills to effectively implement the intended curriculum objectives and to achieve the intended outcomes. There was a need to develop more support teaching materials. The study further seemed that due to the inadequate curriculum support materials and lack of professional development programmes, teachers were under immense pressure to develop student support activities. This situation had impacted on their practices in terms of directing the curriculum to meet the students' specific learning needs. According to Taylor et al. (1997) and Garganus et al. (1995), teacher training and preparation should precede curriculum development and implementation in order to be conversant with the required skills. This was not the case in the current work. Consequently, the learning needs of children with disabilities were not considered or minimally met through practices like curriculum differentiation (Mentis et al., 2005; Westwood, 2003).

Instructional strategies in use. Instructional practices also played a vital part in terms of meeting the learning needs of all learners who were included in the four schools. It appeared that due to the outcomes-based education initiative, there was a little difference in how the graduate teachers and experienced teachers used different instructional strategies. The graduate teachers in both rural and urban settings were comfortable to implement the outcomes-based curriculum. 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. This group of 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 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 less 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 the college and they were energetic and desired to implement them in the regular classrooms.

On the other hand, the experienced teachers were under pressure to implement the outcomes-based curriculum. Two main reasons were identified about this situation in all the four schools. Firstly, the content of the outcomes-based 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 to implement the outcomes-based education. For instance, to conduct research on the different strands and outcomes of the curriculum was deemed difficult for the teachers. This was because in the traditional curriculum, teachers were used to curriculum materials which had various pre-developed teaching strategies, teachers' questions and answers as guides, and children's activities were ready for them to use in their teaching practices. The outcomes-based curriculum however, demanded the teachers to search for appropriate

instructional strategies to complement the curriculum content. The basic reasoning is that the experienced teachers or so-called 'old-timers' did not have the 'know-how' to implement the outcomes-based 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 special and inclusive education influenced positive teacher attitudes, actions and practices towards inclusion, but for the case of the experienced teachers and school administrators in the current study it was lacking.

One of the most vital instructional strategies identified in the study, which the staff members were using was parental/relative involvement in the teaching and learning practices. Though the needs of children with disabilities in the all the four schools were minimally met by using other instructional strategies, the parental or extended relatives' involvement in the teaching and learning processes had the potential to foster the education of children with disabilities. This approach was useful because from the Melanesian culture, parents or other relatives take responsibility in taking care of people who are old, marginalised, and with disabilities (Ahai, 1993). Ahai in his study in PNG also revealed that children developed positive attitudes towards their relatives or elders who were involved in the teaching and learning process. Though the involvement and achievement of children with disabilities was not specially shown, there was potential for this approach to meet the learning needs of children with disabilities in the regular schools under study.

Assessment strategies and practices. The study indicated that assessment was considered vital and central practice in the teaching and learning process. However, there was a marked difference in the way assessment was perceived and executed in the four schools. The assessment used was based on the outcomes-based-education curriculum (Department of Education, 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b). That meant there was a major shift in the way assessment was done. The study suggested that there was a shift in assessment practices in the four schools whereby teachers had moved from the traditional tests and exam driven assessment to an ecological assessment. In other words, as well as

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considering tests and exams for assessment, everything the children did such as practical subjects and sporting skills was also assessed. According to Gurganus et al. (1995), this was a direction towards achieving constructive, hands-on and authentic assessment drawing on the children's learning from different perspectives. In so doing, children's learning was assessed and evaluated from both the academic as well as the practical perspectives. This kind of assessment is arguably the ecological assessment which is based on the child's interaction with the surrounding environment in the form of human, physical and social relations (More et al., 1999; Smith et al., 1998; Thomas, 2005).

It was also seen from the current study that all the staff members expressed satisfaction on the use of ecological based assessment. This was because the ecological assessment was liberal and fair in assessing the students' learning from different perspectives, particularly the promotion of an 'academic pathway' and the 'practical life skills pathway' which all children were capable of achieving. The difference identified was that while the graduate teachers were supported by their college training, the experienced teachers and school administrators were supported by their professional experiences, though some experienced staff members were going through staff development during the time of the study. However, though staff members expressed satisfaction on the ecological assessment, the assessment strategies did not specifically focus on children with disabilities through assessment differentiation. Conversely, instead of differentiating the assessment practices to cater for individual children's needs, the same kinds of assessment practices were applied to all children. Thus, this approach seemed that it did not cater for the needs of children with disabilities in the four regular schools, but it had the potential to promote inclusive practices.

Classroom management and organisation. From the study it was seen that based on the assessment results, students were often categorised into three main groups as part of the classroom management and organisation practice. These categories include: above average, average, and below average students. The categorisation and grouping also determined the staff members' classroom management and organisation practices and promoted the deficit connotations (Fulcher, 1989; More et al., 1999; O'Brian et al.,

2005). That meant students who did not do well in the academic subjects were 'often labelled as slow learners' and were placed in the 'below average category' whilst those students who got good grades were 'assumed as fast learners' and placed in the 'above average category'. It can therefore be inferred that students who were below average were categorised under the medical and/or deficit discourse and labelling ensued (Fulcher, 1989; Skrtic, 1991). The labelling meant that when children were categorised as 'below average', they were regarded as 'slow learners' or 'children with learning problems'. A predicament the current study did not delve into is the kind of practices and measures used by the teachers and school administrators to help remedy the students who were categorised as 'below average.' However, generally it was suggested that as a temporary measure through the classroom management and organisational practices, below average students were put in 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 staff members were doing to include children with disabilities. However, while this may be true to some degree, inclusive education was more than just classroom placement and seating (Foreman, 2005; Wood, 2006). It was seen that the specific changes to their teaching styles, the curriculum, the classroom sub-culture, and assistive tools to meet individual children's learning appeared to be lacking in Urban-2, Rural-1, and Rural-2. There was an exception in Urban-1 because although it was minimally done, inclusive practices were implemented with the support of the Callan Service Resource Centre staff.

Staff members' attitudes. The study also pointed out that teachers' and school administrators' attitudes influenced the way they perceived children with disabilities and their subsequent inclusion in the regular classrooms (Aksamit et al., 1987; Harvey, 1985; Leyser et al., 1994). However, differing views and attitudes were held by the staff members in the current study, which were influenced by various aspects. Firstly, gender disparity did influence the kind of attitudes exhibited by staff members in the four schools. It was seen that staff members who were teachers as mothers and had children of their own supported the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular classrooms

(Aksamit et al., 1987; Harvey, 1985). However, this attitude was based on the staff members' personal sympathy, compassion and love for the children and it was not based on the need for 'authentic education' (Janney et al., 1995; Myles & Simpson, 1989). In this discussion authentic education is generically referred to as the assimilation of the academic and life skills based content knowledge in the outcomes-based education curriculum. Nevertheless, despite the staff members' rhetorical acceptance of children with disabilities, their actions and practices to cater for the needs of these children were minimal or non-existent, particularly in Urban-2, Rural-1 and Rural-2. Secondly, the location of the support services like the Callan Services Resource Center played a major part in the way teachers developed and exhibited their attitudes. Staff members in Urban-1 expressed more positive attitudes towards including children with disabilities in their school and classrooms. This is because this group of staff members was supported by staff from the Callan Services Resource Centre through in-service training programmes. In so doing, they had some ideas on how to include children with disabilities in their school and/classrooms. Other studies have found that specialist resource teachers' expertise and support was found to be an important factor that influenced regular teachers' attitudes, actions and practices towards fostering inclusive practices (Carrington, 1999; Janney et al., 1995; Kauffman et al., 1989; Center et al., 1987). Thirdly, generally staff members who had some training on inclusive education were more supportive of inclusive education. Similar findings were reported in other studies (Beh-Pajooh, 1992; Dickens-Smith, 1995; Shimman, 1990; Taylor et al., 1997). Therefore, the need for training in special education, inclusive practices and disabilities to precede inclusive education programme implementation had been documented and also identified in the current study.

However, the current study further hinted that while most staff members expressed positive attitudes towards inclusion, this was identified to be a rhetorical stance. Their actual practices in the school and classroom contexts did not seem to reflect what they expressed in words. That meant their practices and actions in the classroom contexts to meet the specific learning needs of children with disabilities were minimal or non-existent. However, a commitment towards inclusive education was seen in Urban-1 and

this suggested that the training and support provided by the staff members at the Callan Services Resource Centre were proving successful towards fostering inclusive practices.

5.5   Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter the results of the study have been presented in line with the literature. For the purposes of clarity and coherence, the four major themes that emerged in the data analysis have been retained together with other findings from the literature. The major themes include: staff understanding of special and inclusive education concepts, school cultural leadership and organisational practices, issues pertaining to the school cultural features/practices and implications for staff, and school cultural policies and practices. The study has suggested that due to the staff members' limited understanding of what constitutes special education, inclusive education, and disabilities, children's learning needs appeared to be minimally met. This situation was coupled with lack of adequate training, policies, and the non-proactive stance of the schools' leadership. The staff members claimed that inclusive education was already in existence in the schools, but according to the literature this was manifestation of the 'functional mainstreaming' and it was not full inclusion. The next chapter shall provide the summary of the entire study.

CHAPTER SIX:

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview of the Chapter

This research has investigated the school cultural features and practices that influenced or did not influence inclusive education and the impact of inclusion. The first section presents a summary of results, while the second section talks about the major conclusions and implications drawn from the study. The third section makes some recommendations for practice and action, which emanated from the findings of the study. The final section makes recommendations for further research. This chapter is provided as a summary for the entire study.

6.1 Summary of Findings of the Study

The summary is presented in line with the four broad areas based on the major research question initially posed for this study. Firstly, the school cultural features and practices identified are presented. Secondly, the school cultural features and practices that influenced inclusive education are discussed. Thirdly, the school cultural features and practices that were present but did not influence inclusive education are presented. This final section refers to the school cultural features and practices and the impact they had on inclusive education.

6.1.1 School cultural features and practices identified

The study that was conducted in the United States from which the current study emanated identified a connection between the successful inclusive education programme and the school cultural features and practices (Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999) (see

section 1.3). These authors identified three school cultural features and practices which include; *inclusive leadership, a broad view of school community, shared language and values,* and described how these combined to influence inclusive school culture. Firstly, *inclusive leadership* consisted of democratic and participatory decision making, using a values driven approach where children with disabilities were accorded 'rights' for active involvement and participation through the school practices. Secondly, *a broad view of school community* was considered, where membership was extended to people who were at the school as well as in the local community in which the reality of shared responsibility was promoted. This was where the best educational and social outcomes of the students were assumed to be achieved. Thirdly, *shared language and values* involved a demonstration of 'belonging' which was represented by the language they spoke such as 'we are all special' and 'school for everybody'. In the current study school leadership was identified, but did not influence inclusive practices in the four schools. The 'broad view of school community' and 'shared language and values' did not emerge as separate themes, but were evident as part of other school cultural features and practices. These combined to influence inclusive practices in the four schools.

The research findings of the current study have shown four broad school cultural features and practices that were evident in the schools under study. These include: 'staff understanding of special and inclusive education concepts', 'school cultural leadership and organisation practices', 'school cultural features/practices and implications for staff', and 'school cultural policies and practices'. Within these four broad school cultural features and practices, other sub-cultures which had influenced or did not influence inclusive practices were identified. It was also found that the impact of the school cultural features and practices towards inclusive practices was crucial. The four broad school cultural features and practices identified are explained below.

Firstly, the results of the present work suggest that teachers and school administrators in the four schools had limited understanding and knowledge of what constitutes special education, inclusive education, and disabilities. There was evidence of a marked difference where the experienced staff members or the so-called 'old-timers' had limited

or no understanding and knowledge about these concepts. One of the major setbacks was because they had not been exposed to the concepts and how to teach children with disabilities either during their initial teacher training at the college or through other staff professional development programmes. On the other hand, teachers who graduated after 1994 had some understanding and knowledge of what constitutes special education, inclusive education, and disabilities in general. This was because staff members interviewed had acquired knowledge and skills of special education, inclusive education, and disabilities during their initial teacher training at the colleges. However, for all staff members, in-service training (as part of their teacher professional development focusing on special education, inclusive education, and disabilities) was not apparent, except for the staff members who came from Urban-1.

Secondly, the results suggest that the leadership and organisation were part of the school cultural features and practices that were in existence in the four schools. That meant school administrators were viewed as people with authority, power and influence. It was found that the roles of school administrators had changed from school principals only, to that of school inspectors as well. Hence, the position of 'being an inspector' played a major part when discharging their professional responsibilities, and how the teachers viewed them. Thirdly, the study showed that school cultural features or practices and their implications for staff had a bearing on how children with disabilities were included in the regular schools and classrooms. Finally, the policies were also considered as being part of the school cultural features and practices. While the above four broad school cultural features and practices were prevalent, they manifested varied degrees of influence towards inclusive practices.

6.1.2 School cultural features and practices that influenced inclusive education

The analysis of the study identified four main school cultural features and practices that had influenced the inclusion of children with disabilities in the schools under study. Firstly, collective values associated with inclusion had influenced inclusive practices, which were underpinned by the expectations and equal valuing of all students in the schools. This means that all children, whether with disabilities or not were allowed to be

enrolled and were already in the schools and classrooms under study. In so doing, the staff members viewed this practice to be inclusive education, contrary to the literary definition of inclusion where the required support is provided. Secondly, the staff members expected all children in the classroom to succeed in the learning process. This expectation was based on the assumption that the 'outcomes-based education' being provided had the capacity to allow students to either continue the 'academic pathway' or the 'practical life skills pathway'. Either way, all students were expected to benefit by either going to tertiary studies or returning to the village with basic life skills. According to the literature, what was happening in the four schools was not in fact 'full inclusion', but rather 'functional mainstreaming'. That means that children were merely placed in the schools and classrooms with no support provision to foster full inclusion. However, this is an imposition of a definition of inclusion as stated in the literature from other countries. What was happening in the four schools was culturally relevant and an acceptable form of inclusion. This will be explained later in this chapter (see section 6.2).

Thirdly, a significant revelation is that the Callan Services and support provisions they provided were influencing the inclusion of children with disabilities. However, while Callan Services was supporting inclusive practices, this action was concentrated only in Urban-1. The influential work of Callan Services was evident from the responses provided by the staff members in Urban-1. However, it was found that though there was a need, Callan Services were not extended to Urban-2, Rural-1, and Rural-2. Finally, the study found that there were differences in understanding and implementing the special and inclusive education policies. Special and inclusive education policies were understood from 'human rights' and the staff members' 'professional and moral' perspectives. That meant the inclusion of children with disabilities in the schools and classrooms was considered their right and teachers had to include all children as part of their professional and moral responsibilities. In so doing, this perspective encouraged and influenced the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular classrooms.

On the other hand, three fundamental school cultural features and practices were identified as having the potential to influence inclusive practices. Firstly, the 'outcomes-based education' curriculum in use was focussed on the 'academic pathway' and 'practical life skills pathway'. This curriculum encouraged learning whereby all children would learn the intended objectives, skills and outcomes. In one way or another, all children's learning needs were assumed to be met in the regular classrooms. That meant children with disabilities had a chance to grasp all or some of the skills through the academic subjects or from the practical life skills. Secondly, the assessment practices were also based on the outcomes-based curriculum which focused on the 'academic pathway' and 'practical life skills pathway'. It was based on the ecological assessment where everything that was happening within the context of the child was assessed. Therefore, this assessment practice had the potential to include children with disabilities in the regular schools. Thirdly, though parents and other relatives did not take an active role in the children's learning, the outcomes-based curriculum had encouraged them to participate in some school based programmes and activities. The staff members valued the parents' and relatives' contributions as children were able to relate well with them, including those with disabilities. Considering this approach from the Melanesian perspective where children with disabilities are taken care of by their parents and relatives, it was an important step towards fostering inclusive education. Consequently, this approach had the potential to include children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms, but it was underused.

6.1.3 School cultural features and practices that did not influence inclusive education

The results of the study showed that although the staff members claimed to include all children in their schools and classrooms, in line with the literature full inclusion was non-existent in all the four schools. This situation resulted from a culmination of several school cultural features and practices that acted as obstacles to promoting full inclusion. Firstly, the school administrators appeared to be 'overly obsessed' and their roles and responsibilities were governed by the centrally formulated 'duty statements'. The school administrators discharged their professional responsibilities along with their duty

statements as this was what the school inspectors based their evaluation and assessment of their performance on. The evaluative reports also determined their job continuation, promotions, demotions, and salary increments. Hence, in the process of discharging their professional duties and roles in line with the duty statements, the staff members were so 'rigidly bound' that the needs of children with disabilities were neglected. One major contributing factor was because the duty statements did not make a mention of how they could meet the needs of children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms.

Secondly, in regard to the school administrator and teacher relationships, the school administrators were detached from the teachers and their classroom practices. Communication between the teachers and school administrators was limited. This was because the school administrators were viewed as being powerful, influential, and as having an authoritarian status in exercising their professional responsibilities. A worst case scenario was evident when the school administrators were also given some of the teacher inspection responsibilities. This shift in inspection responsibility meant that teachers were also discharging their professional roles and responsibilities along with their duty statements, which made even less chance for the accommodation of the needs of children with disabilities. Thirdly, the school inspection and support services provided little input towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms. School inspectors were detached from the teachers, school administrators and the school cultural practices. Also, the inspectors' teacher evaluation and assessment practices were based on the teachers' duty statements and thus, the needs of the children with disabilities were minimally considered.

Another point which was noted was that the staff members were not aware of the 'National Special Education Plan, Policy and Guidelines' that was approved in 1993 by the PNG government and implemented in 1994. There was also no evidence of special and inclusive education policies being in existence in all the four schools. The staff members did not take responsibility and ownership to develop and implement school based special and inclusive education policies. Instead there was a culture of shifting blame and responsibilities from the teachers to school administrators and eventually to

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the Provincial Education Division and the National Department of Education. One major factor that had a negative ripple effect was that there was minimal communication among the National Department of Education, Provincial Education Division, and the staff members at the school level. However, the proper and established channel through which communication could have filtered down to the school level was through the school inspectors as representatives of the National Department of Education, but this communication channel was not considered. Finally, there was a marked difference in the way the graduate teachers and the so-called 'old-timers' were using the instructional strategies. Due to the introduction of the outcomes-based education curriculum, graduate teachers were comfortable and conversant with the use of different teaching strategies. While the use of different teaching strategies had the potential to include children with disabilities in the regular classrooms, this was not obvious in the results. Conversely, the so-called 'old-timers' were under immense pressure to implement the outcomes-based education curriculum. They had a limited repertoire of different, but appropriate teaching strategies to complement the outcomes-based curriculum. As a result of this situation the learning needs of children with disabilities was lacking.

6.1.4   School cultural features, practices and impact towards inclusion

The findings of the study appeared to suggest that children with disabilities were already accepted and were part of the education system. The staff members therefore had perceived this practice to be inclusion. However, the literature about inclusion from the western countries would consider this action to be 'functional mainstreaming'. That meant children with disabilities were accepted and placed in the regular classrooms all of their time and they were allowed to take part in the same programmes as other children. The literature suggests that this practice was not inclusion or full inclusion because there was no support provision to meet an individual child's learning needs through curriculum, instruction, and assessment differentiation. This study has found that the major factor that affected effective inclusive practices in the four schools was the limited understanding and knowledge of the staff members about what constitutes special education, inclusive education, and disabilities in general. This situation had a negative ripple effect on the features and practices of the school culture. Generally, that meant due

to the staff members' limited understanding of the principles, skills, values and assumptions associated with special and inclusive education, their practices to include children with disabilities in the regular school and classroom was at stake. The results of the study further indicated that the special education policy, which was a centrally formulated document, did not trickle down to the school and classroom levels. Therefore, this inaction created a gap between policy formulation, implementation and school and classroom practices. In other words, there was a huge gap between special and inclusive education policy and practice. However, inclusive education was being implemented in Urban-1. This was largely due to the Callan Service Resource Centre and in-service training they provided. Nevertheless, the Callan Service was operating as a religious and charity support service. Other studies have also confirmed that when the special education resource people collaborate with the regular classroom teachers, inclusive practices are promoted. Conversely, viewing it from the definition of inclusive education from other western countries, the current study showed that inclusive practices were not evident in the other three schools.

6.2 Conclusions and Implications of the Study

The results from this study have shed some light on the current practices of the teachers and school administrators. Due to the nature of this case study, the implications resulting from the research should possibly be confined to the four schools. However, one of the basic characteristics of this case study as initially envisaged was that the results could be related to what was happening in other schools in Southern Highlands Province and PNG at large. However, this action has to be interpreted with caution as school contexts and cultures were found to be different from one another. The details of the implications are provided below in view of the four broad school cultural features and practices identified in this study and the research context.

The commonly held views and assumptions of the teachers and school administrators was that their views of what constitutes special education, inclusive education and disabilities appeared to be limited. The staff members in the four schools generally had limited

knowledge about the concepts and their associated skills and practices. However, there was a marked difference whereby the teachers who graduated from colleges commencing in 1994 were aware of the concepts and their associated practices. The so-called 'old-timers' generally had limited or no ideas about special and inclusive education and this situation ultimately shed negative influences on their practices. These findings implied that the staff members did not consider the learning needs of children with disabilities in spite of the fact that they were already enrolled in the schools. Consequently, due to teachers not talking responsibility and custodian to inclusion as evidenced in their practices, the learning needs of the children with disabilities were at stake. Thus, this situation calls for the institution of a staff awareness programme through appropriate staff professional development practices.

Some of the staff members suggested that the school leadership should be more enthusiastic in promoting inclusive practices supported by appropriate organisational practices. The results reported in this study attest that the school cultural leadership and organisational practices did little in promoting inclusive practices in the four schools. A climate of confusion, blame and 'whose responsibility?' attitudes were evident in the schools under study. This negative social situation could be possibly diffused through adequate awareness and professional development programmes. These programmes could be initiated in the school contexts by starting off with the school leaders being aware of the concepts, principles and values associated with inclusion. This situation calls for awareness programmes to inform the school leadership. In the process, the school internal and external environments and cultures could be considered for deliberate change and improvement.

As mentioned earlier, children with disabilities were already included in the four schools under study (see section 6.1.4). The staff members claimed this to be inclusive education, but according to the literature from western countries, this was 'functional mainstreaming' where children with disabilities were placed in the regular classrooms with no additional support provisions to assist them achieve equity. Whilst this inclusive practice could be argued along the lines of definitions of inclusion used in 'western'

countries, there was an evidence of a 'contextualised and Melanesian cultural based form of inclusion' found in this study. Arguably, the kind of inclusion in existence in the four schools was a culturally relevant form of inclusion based on 'personal love, sympathy, care, tolerance, compassion, and empathy'. However, considering these as the universal human virtues, one would view this form of inclusion from the 'western' worldview and argue this to be the manifestation of the 'charity discourse' (see section 2.1.2). It is argued that the 'charity discourse' puts a negative spin or connotation on how the child with disabilities is viewed, which could ultimately devalue the child and the associated service provisions. However, the data derived from the cultural Melanesian context suggests that the kind of inclusion in existence originated from the same blood relations and therefore the children with disabilities deserve an unconditional love, care, sympathy, tolerance, compassion and empathy. This is evident by virtue of belonging to a given family, group, and clan as collectively sharing same blood relations (see section 1.1). Therefore, this thesis has added 'a culturally meaningful form of inclusion' by understanding the inter-and-intra relationships that exist among the people in the research cultural context.

However, it was seen from the findings of the study that though children with disabilities were already there in the regular classrooms, the school and teacher inspection practices did not foster inclusive practices. Many staff members said that the inspectors were detached from the staff members and the schools and practices. This situation was underpinned by issues of bureaucratic power-play and the influence exhibited by the inspectors and school administrators in the process of discharging their professional roles and responsibilities. One major factor that directly, but in a rigid way influenced the staff members' roles and responsibilities and their school and classroom practices was the use of 'duty statements'. This approach was not proactive in fostering inclusive practices in the schools under study. Therefore, there is a need for attitudinal and professional change towards fostering the learning needs of children with disabilities in inclusive schools and classrooms. This means a concerted effort is required whereby teacher evaluation and assessment can be based on the staff members' individual creativity and constructive ideas and students' learning outcomes, in the outcomes-based education curriculum.

A finding that has been reported elsewhere in this thesis is the work of the Callan Services (see section 5.3). Despite the inaction and obstacles like that of parents' minimal contributions, the Callan Service was found to provide an inclusive direction and framework through school consultation and collaboration with the staff members, particularly in Urban-1. Considering this work as a starting platform, every effort should be made to further encourage and extend this undertaking to other schools. It was found from the findings of this study that the National Department of Education and Provincial Division of Education were doing little in terms of fostering inclusive education. Therefore, through appropriate awareness and professional development the school cultural features and practices such as the curriculum, instructional strategies, assessment practices and the classroom management procedures can be areas to target during the professional development programme initiatives. This course of action will be greatly influenced through the concerted effort of the staff members in consultation with the school inspectors and parents where possible.

The results from this study have suggested that no one person or organisation was taking responsibility and ownership in formulating and disseminating relevant special and inclusive education policies. However, it has shown that there was a special and inclusive education policy statement already in existence at the national level. Nevertheless, the principles, assumptions and values associated with the special education policy did not trickle down to the school level. This situation called for 'connectivity' between the national, provincial and the staff members at the school level. One of the gaps identified in this study was the inaction of the school inspectors to promote inclusive practices. Therefore, the school inspectors should be used as a medium of communication to 'connect' the staff members and the authorities at the provincial and national levels. In so doing, nationally and provincially developed special and inclusive education policy documents or frameworks can be effectively translated into action at the schools and classrooms. This action would also further foster the development and implementation of school based special and inclusive education policies and programmes.

6.3 Recommendations for Practice and Action

While a wider and concerted effort from all sectors of the society is needed to promote inclusive practices, three recommendations are suggested for action to improve the situation in the schools towards fostering inclusive practices. Firstly, adequate staff preparation should be considered through pre-service and in-service training. It should focus on inclusive leadership and organisational practices, inclusive school practices, administrators, teachers and parental collaboration and inclusive inspection and support services. This action is appropriate so that the staff members can understand the tenets and skills associated with special education, inclusive education, and disabilities. In so doing, the staff members can take ownership and be responsible for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular schools and classrooms. Secondly, the work Callan Services is doing needs to be extended to other schools as part of staff job descriptions. This is because while the government is lagging behind in terms of resources, financial and human resource supply and support, this organisation is already on the ground supporting Urban-1 towards achieving inclusive education. Thirdly, the school administrators and school inspectors should make use of some staff members who are already in the schools with special education, inclusive education, and disability backgrounds, experiences, and qualifications. A serious 'stock-take' needs to be done to identify these staff members who are already part of the education system to provide in-service training for other staff members and also to act as role models for other teachers towards fostering inclusive education. Other teachers can learn from their practices and follow suit.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This study is the first of its kind in Southern Highlands Province and PNG at large, particularly when investigating inclusion through the school cultural 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 investigated the staff members and their practices in view of the school culture towards inclusion, a

further study needs to be done on the extent to which the school culture influences children's learning in the inclusive classrooms in PNG. Secondly, the current study has identified a gap where the school inspection system had provided limited or no support for inclusive practices. A study should be done to identify the extent to which school inspectors perform their professional responsibilities in inclusive schools and classrooms. Thirdly, this study has found that staff members had limited understanding of what constitutes special education, inclusive education and disabilities. Therefore, future research should look at how professional development can make a positive impact on the staff members' understanding and knowledge of inclusive education and disabilities, and evaluate the impact of this training on the school culture and staff members' practices**.**

However, as school culture is a complex phenomenon for investigation as identified elsewhere in this thesis, future research should make an attempt to do an ethnographic study which will involve prolonged study in a given school cultural context. The three further research areas as recommended above should deliberately take this course of action rather than resorting to 'one-off' studies. From the ecological systems perspective, "… a child at the microsystem level … must be studied over a sufficient period to reveal the ongoing process of the child's status at a single juncture of growth" (Thomas, 2005, p. 352). In so doing, it may be possible to understand 'how things are done' in the school cultural context to foster authentic inclusive education and the impact this has on children in the classroom. This thesis closes with a contemplation poem on inclusion as an epilogue provided at the end of the piece (see page 178).

AN EPILOGUE

The 'person' who lived with the 'cerebral palsy', aspired and attained a 'Masters in Professional Counseling' despite all odds through inclusive education then reflected as:

Contemplations

My future aspirations from where I once stood,

Worked out even better than I thought they would.

Aspirations of not only what I hoped I'd achieve,

But a yearning to know how my life would proceed.

For every step that I took to my future aspirations bright

Was helped by kind people and the spirits guiding lights.

The paths that never seemed quite right eventually received repair,

And now I help to fix the paths for others who cross there.

Some paths that we washed out by the storms never got remade,

And because of that it forced me to move onward when afraid.

I no longer truly fear failing at my tasks.

I'll just continue doing what's brought me progress on the path.

I now know what it's like to attain the aspirations that I lacked,

And now when I look into the mirror, an advocate looks back.

As I travel along and have met the aspirations in my life

I am ready to teach others how to continue this fight.

(Trovar, 2005, p. 190, cf. thesis prologue) [original emphasis]

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: An explanation of the codes used

School Code	Teachers Interviewed	Teachers Observed	School Administrators
Urban-1	2	T1	2
Urban-2	3	T2	2
Rural-1	3	T3	2
Rural-2	3	T2	2
SUB-TOTAL	**11**		**8**
TOTAL	**19**		

NB: Teachers who were observed are the same teachers interviewed initially.

Coding protocol for the source of quotations

Urban-1 = refers to school one located in an urban area.
Urban-2 = refers to school two located in an urban area.
Rural-1 = refers to school one located in a rural area.
Rural-2 = refers to school two located in a rural area.

A coded instrument was used throughout the thesis where direct quotations were made from the interviews and the observational data. For the purposes of maintaining privacy, the codes have been used to explain or support what each participant has said. Here is a further explanation of the codes used:

Urban 1-2 = refers to urban schools, e.g., Urban-1 refers to the first urban school studied and Urban-2 refers to the second urban school that was studied. The study followed one after the other, thus 1-2 represent the chronological order of the actual data collection.
Rural 1-2 = refers to rural schools, e.g., Rural-1 refers to the first rural school that was studied and Rural-2 refers to the second rural school that was studied in a chronological order.

T1-3 = refers to names of teachers who took part in the study.
P = refers to principal of the school.

DP = refers to non-teaching deputy principal of the school.
DPT = refers to a teaching deputy principal.

NB: Direct quotations used in the analysis were represented by the above codes. For example, Urban-1/T1 means the first teacher that was interviewed in the first school in an urban area; Urban-1/P means the principal that took part in the study from the first urban school, and Urban-1/DPT2 means the teaching deputy principal who was interviewed second and so on.

Appendix B: Sample participant information and consent form
(For the Teachers and School Administrators)

Before you sign the consent form below, please read the relevant information about the study. If you feel comfortable to take part in the study, sign the consent form as a proof that you have read and understood the research title, the objective, the rationale and benefits, the areas that you will involve in the study and the associated ethical principles.

Title of Project

School cultural features and practices that influence inclusive education in Papua New Guinea: A consideration of schools in Southern Highlands Province.

Research Objective

To investigate what school cultural factors and practices do or do not influence inclusive education and the impact on inclusion in schools in the Southern Highlands Province, PNG.

Information about the Study

As you are aware, special education may be a new idea to most of you as teachers and school administrators. The inclusion of children with special needs in the regular education system is an educational shift with an intention of providing equal educational opportunities to all children. This is a major way of showing respect for children with special needs based on the principles of social justice, rights and equality. It has to be brought to your attention that special education courses have been recently incorporated into the existing curriculum in Primary Teachers' Colleges in Papua New Guinea but most teachers who graduated prior to the introduction of this course are not aware of what special education is all about. Some of you may be in this situation. From my (researcher) personal experiences as a teacher in primary schools, a secondary school and two Primary Teachers' Colleges in Papua New Guinea, it is clear that even teachers who took some special education courses are not sure of how to go about implementing inclusive education. Therefore, this study will attempt to investigate the school cultural factors and practices that influence inclusive education. It is hoped that through the findings of the current study, relevant legislations and policies can be developed, both at the national, provincial and school levels for the education of children with special education needs. This can be done by making aware of your (teachers and school administrators) own teaching and school administrative practices and how you go about including children with special needs in the regular classrooms and schools at large. If you want to know more about the study I am willing to provide that verbally during the interviews.

Areas that you will involve in the Study

Be informed that as part of the data collection process, you will be involved in either a semi-structured interview or a non-participant observation or both. First, you will be interviewed on individual basis using a semi-structured interview schedule. Then where possible group semi-structured interviews will be conducted to gauge collective views on the inclusion of students with special needs in your classroom and/or school. Individual interviews will take about 40 minutes whilst the group interviews will take less than 40 minutes. In the semi-structured interviews, you will be asked some questions related to the inclusion of children with special needs in your classroom or school. Once you have answered the first question, some related questions will be asked in relation to the inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools. Second, a non-participant observation will be conducted. This will be done during your staff meetings, supervisory meetings, strand meetings, or other cluster group meetings that may be conducted in your school. During both the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations, I will tape-record as well as write down your exact words, how the meeting is conducted, actions that you will exhibit and other things related to the inclusion of children with special needs in the regular schools. This letter therefore serves to seek your full permission to interview you as well as to observe in these meetings. Third, some documents pertaining to inclusive education that may be in your school such as national or school policies, rules and regulations, meeting minutes and resolutions will be collected and analyzed. If you are the school principal or someone responsible for the school library or archives, this letter serves to seek your full permission to have access to the documents that may be available. Through the use of the three data collection methods, it is hoped that the factors and practices that contribute to the inclusion of students with special needs can be identified for improvement of the current education system in your school, Southern Highlands Province and Papua New Guinea at large.

Be informed that during the entire research process, you as the research participants and your school will be respected as much as possible. That means individual name(s) of your school or you as the research participant(s) will not be mentioned in the write-up but a code name or group representations will be used. The study will take three weeks and such you may withdraw from the study during or at the end of the first week. After the first week into the research, you will be deemed to be comfortable to take part in the study, which will lead to the completion of the research project. After the data collection, you will have an opportunity to look through the data collected; both tape-recorded and hand-written transcripts for verification purposes. When the study is completed, one copy of a hard bound thesis will be sent to your school as part of the ethical research process.

NB: Please tick the appropriate boxes and write your full name and sign on page 34 of this document if you feel comfortable to take part in this study.

My consent to take part in the study *(put a ✓ to the boxes below)*

☐ I have read and fully understood the information about this study provided by the researcher.

☐ I understand that even if I have initially agreed to take part in the study, I can withdraw consent but only up to the first week into the research project.

☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary.

I (*please print your name*)_____, of (*name of school*) _____, in Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea have read the above information and do agree to participate in this research and to have my interview tape–recorded.

Signature: ……………………………………….

Position: …………………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………….

End of consent form

Appendix C: Sample semi-structured interview protocol (teachers)

School:
……………………………………………………………………………………..
Interview Number:
……………………………………………………………………………....
Teacher's Name:
……………………………………………………………………………....
Grade taught:
………………………………………………………………………………….
Date:
…………………………………………………………………………………..
Starting Time: @ …………………………………………………………………...

Special and inclusive education
1. Explain what you know about special education.
2. Explain what you know about inclusive education.
3. Do you have students with disabilities in your classroom?
4. What do you do to ensure that students with disabilities are included in your classroom?

Inclusive education policies and practices
5. Tell me about special education policies in Papua New Guinea?
6. Tell me about school policies that support inclusive education in your school?

School cultural environment
7. How is your school environment/classroom organised to include students with disabilities?
8. Tell me about things you do in the classroom to include everyone?
9. How does the school/classroom environment allow students with disabilities to attend your classroom and/or school?

Teacher's attitudes towards inclusive practices
10. How do you feel when students with disabilities are in your classroom?
11. How do you help students with disabilities in their learning?
12. Explain how you feel about your training opportunities to help students with disabilities in your classroom?

Teaching practices and processes for inclusion
13. What teaching strategies do you apply in order to give support to students with disabilities in your classroom?
14. Tell me about assistance you may get from other teachers, senior teachers and the school administrators towards the education of students with disabilities in your classroom?
15. What support have you received from the parents of students with disabilities?

Inclusive education curriculum
16. Can you tell me about the curriculum of the school and how it is implemented?
17. How do you consider the needs of all students (those with disabilities and those without) when planning your curriculum and programs?

Assessment practices in inclusive classrooms
18. Tell me about the assessment you use in your classroom/school.
19. What things do you consider when assessing students with disabilities?
20. How do you use the assessment strategies to meet the needs of all students in the classroom?

Impact on the teacher and classroom practices
21. Tell me about your confidence to teach students with disabilities in your classroom?
22. What things facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities in your classroom?
23. What changes do you make to accommodate the learning needs of students with disabilities in your classroom?

END OF INTERVIEW SESSION # ……………………..
Ending Time: @ ………………………………………

Appendix D: Sample semi-structured interview protocol
(School Administrators)

School: ……………………………………………………………………………

Interview Number:

…………………………………………………………………………………..

Teacher's Name:

…………………………………………………………………………................

Grade taught: …………………………………………………………………..

Date: …………………………………………………………………………...

Starting Time: @ …………………………………………………………..

Special and inclusive education
1. Explain what you know about special education.
2. Explain what you know about inclusive education.
3. Do you have students with disabilities in your school?
4. What do you do to ensure that students with disabilities are included in your school?

Inclusive education policies and practices
5. Tell me about special education policies in Papua New Guinea?
6. Tell me about school policies that support inclusive education in your school?

School cultural environment
7. How is your school environment/classroom organised to include students with disabilities?
8. Tell me about things you do in the school/ classroom to include everyone?
9. How does the school/classroom environment allow students with disabilities to attend your classroom and/or school?

Leadership and administrative roles for inclusion
10. What do you feel about the allocation of responsibilities to staff for them take care of students with disabilities?
11. What are your responsibilities towards encouraging the learning of students with disabilities?
12. Explain some of the ways through which the school inspector supports the education of students with disabilities in your school or classroom.

School administrators' attitudes towards inclusive practices
13. How do you feel when students with disabilities are in your school?
14. Explain how you feel about your training opportunities to help students with disabilities in your school?

Teaching practices and processes for inclusion
15. Can you tell me the kind of teaching strategies that are available to support students with disabilities in your school?

16. Tell me about the kind of assistance you would get from teachers, senior teachers and other school administrators towards the education of students with disabilities in your school?
17. What support have you received from the parents of children with disabilities in your school?

Inclusive education curriculum
18. Can you tell me about the curriculum of the school and how it is implemented?
19. How does the school as a whole consider the needs of all the students when planning the school curriculum and programs?

Assessment practices in inclusive classrooms
20. Tell me about the assessment that is used in your school.
21. What things does the school consider when assessing students with disabilities?
22. How does the school use the assessment strategies to meet the needs of all the students in the school?

Impact on the school administrator and school practices
23. Tell me about your confidence to teach/enrol students with disabilities in your school?
24. What things facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities in your school?
25. What changes do you make to accommodate the learning needs of students with disabilities in your school?

<div align="center">

END OF INTERVIEW SESSION # ………………...
Ending Time: @ ………………………………..

</div>

NB: *With your full permission this interview session will be tape-recorded and it will be later transcribed. The transcripts will be returned to you for comments and necessary changes.*

End of interview session and thank you very much for your time.

JOHN L. ROMBO
RESESEARCH INTERVIEWER

Appendix E: Sample interview protocol and coding

AN INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

A CODING PAGE FOR AN INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS	EMMERGING THEMES/OTHER IDEAS

CASE STUDY TWO
PRIMARY SCHOOL
INTERVIEW SESSION #6: MR   – ACTING
PRINCIPAL

This interview is with Mr.   and he is the acting principal of
         Primary School. Mr.   I have with me 25 questions which focus on
         inclusive education in Papua New Guinea as well
as in your school.

Can you explain to me what you know about special education?

Special education is some kind of training. I have attended the Port
Moresby special education centre there and I have just seen few of the
schools there. I also have taken some courses there and they told us that
these children will be enrolling in our schools so that they can be educated
like the rests of the other students. That's what I have heard but we have
not started on anything yet on special education and inclusive education.

Can also explain to me what you know about inclusive education?

Inclusive education means to include those disabled or difficult children
who cannot meet it to formal education like haring problems or learning
problems or all these behavioral problem children. But we should include
them and make them feel that they are part of out children. They have
right which is s~~   ~~ as well as they have the
right to educate themselves.

In your school, do you have any students with disabilities?

Yes, some especially with behavior problems like they are not coming to
school, bigheads and so on I have many of them. But for this school it has
started this year only and I am still talking little disciplinary actions. I am
just acting slowly. The school is still on restoration. I slow get to know
them in terms of where they are coming from, how they are living,
especially those students with disciplinary problems. Disabilities, I don't
have any at the moment. Sight and eye sight, a lot of people, learning
problems I don't have all these. I have problems here to go around
checking it and if he is to do this but especially those students with sight
problems, slow learners, teachers are doing it but I don't know the exact
number of students with such problems. I can't say this number of children
have learning problems.

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You told me that your school was re-instated so what did you mean by that?

At this school there was a **big tribal fight**. So the people came in and destroyed the school, burnt it down completely. We are trying to **rebuild** the school again.

During the tribal fight, some children got disabilities or what do you think?

Yes some kind of disabilities like they don't live in **proper houses**. They are still **scattered all around** and some are **living very far** and coming to school because they are in **fear of the tribal fight in here**. Not may have been injured, no. But they are coming far away and that's why we are starting little bit late not as usual at 8:00am, we started at 9:00am because of staff don't have accommodation, they **sleeping away in the village** or in their own accommodations. They have their own accommodation. That's why I was bit late for school.

Can you also tell me about whether you know about some ███████ education policies in Papua New Guinea?

I have just attended the █████████████████ and took a course on ███████████. Both man and woman have the right to education and no body is to be put down. Another one is those ████████ children with eye problems or hearing problems. They have the right to stay with the normal children, they have the right to sit in the same classroom, and they try to learn the same things. I still remember it.

Do you think there are some policies at the school level towards inclusive education?

Yes we have it because we let those children who have problems like some girls who have been raped are still in school. This is not in my school but in some other schools. At the moment we don't have any of the children with disabilities, especially those with hearing and sight problems and all these. We don't have any here but additional problems and all these we have it. Like a little boy we have him he does not have a house and he lives far away. If he comes late I tell the teachers to let him because he lives far away. Some of these settlers who live around here, they come to school, they live in settlements. They are very poor and have no clothes and other things compared to those educated families who live in permanent houses and they have to prepare well and come to school.

When children with all these kind of problems when they are around in your school, how do you feel?

Yes, yea I feel sympathy, I feel sorry you know to see them like this and the policies usually cover both of them so that when any thing happens with the problem children like this and there are advantage children we will have to bring them and treat them the same way both sides you know.

Now can you tell me how and what you do to ensure that these kind of children are included in the class room?

Put them together with good advanced child or separate them, or try to mix them together in groups with the brighter or average children so they could help each other and they still see that they are part of the group with us.

Ok what do you feel about the allocation of responsibilities to staff for them to take care of this kind of children with disabilities and all that?

Well at the beginning of the year when I allocate classes, firstly I see their situation, their teaching experiences, graduates, specializing in teaching upper grade or lower classes. A teacher is trained to teach children in the class so in similar situations I see that those policies or those skills that he has learnt he is implementing it. I look at how the teachers are going to be supervised, make sure that the teacher is teaching correctly and do the correct disciplinary action and no applying bad disciplinary action.

Can you tell me a little bit about the role of the inspectors?

The inspectors are now called standard officers in line with the reforms. What they are doing now is according to the reform, headmasters we are writing the reports and doing the inspections now. We are called site leaders now and we write reports two times; first round, second third final. When we are writing those reports we have to look into the recommendation from the board, the community, the agency and the areas they can contribute. We also look at the teachers' movement, punctuality, standard of work, the site leaders will compile the report and if the inspector sees that the inspection report that I write is outstanding, then the inspector will come and proof to himself through interviews or see the teachers or talk to the board of management and if he proofs that I am not biased or I have not being bribed when I write the report then that is correct.

What do you think these standard officers are doing? During the inspections, how do you feel about the inclusion of children with disabilities through their practices and what they are doing?

I've seen some inspectors they come in and they check all the classroom plans. First of all when they come they ask we have disability problem children or attitude problem children. They come in and they check and they see the classroom plans, plans of children's attitudes and we explain that this child is like this so I put him first. The inspector might say this child is ok so why do you have to put him in he front and I would day he is a slow learner. He is big in size but he learns very slowly. His eye sights are very nice and he sits very close to the black board so that he can see the board clearly. Some inspectors they come and ask us about children with disabilities before they can write up their reports.

What do you think about your training like the training that you got

[Handwritten margin notes:]

Strategies used for include Chn. with disabilities in inclusive schools.

Peer tutoring

Allocation of staff Responsibilities

Monitoring Teachers

Inspectors Roles
Education Reform
- standard officers
- sharing inspection responsibilities with site leaders
Categorical Inspection Model

Roles of standard officers
- asking questions for disabilities

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probably during your **teacher training** or may be during your DEP(I) or may be during your in-service and all that. Did that help you to include children with disabilities in your school?

During my time we did **two years teacher training**. We did general education studies and we did not do anything but when we came out through our experiences, we did some in-service but not very deep. The in-services that they provide now is very light and very shallow. We are just getting pass on information where somebody goes and trains the others like that and then the train us again. For example, for trainers, inspectors they go for training and they come back and train another man to train the headmasters and the headmasters come again and they train others. This type of training we really don't get much but if we go out for the first time on special education and I've attended that and I've been teaching for some 30 years and I went for **DEP(I)**. It was very difficult type when I stayed there it was very interesting but because of the problems like I got a lot o children I have to look after them. **Currently we have financial problems and all these we find it very difficult go for more studies because of the financial situations we are facing today.** Also the fees are rising now and then and it is very hard to take on studies.

Can you tell me about the kind of teaching strategies that are used in the classroom level?

Yes, teachers who are coming out with Diploma some are learning ok. But us were taught very lightly and not deeply. With the new reform, we are slowly improving the services and it might take at least years before we really put this new learning into practice. We are still training.

Can you tell me the kind of assistance that you get from other people like in Mendi I heard that there is Callan Services there, also the hospital here, may be some other people helping out or the churches. What kind of support do you get to ensure that children's learning is enhanced.

Good because some times they charge us less fees to out children. When they see the forms that the Principal signs and sends that to the hospital, the children get reduced fees. When the students have problems we write a note and the hospital helps on that. The agencies they look for funds for us so that our classrooms are maintained and secure funds. The agency comes and visits us like the Mission Education Secretary (MES).

How about the Callan National Unit?

Callan, ha, I think they are catholic agency so they have not visited us. They have not any information or help to us.

Do you think it's because they are catholic and you guys are United Church and that kind of thing?

I think they are getting in touch with the other and they might come. Our

agency and all these they come around.

What kind support do you get from the parents?

Parents help us and this year is the fourth year now and they have introduced the free education. We need some materials and parents did not pay anything to support their children but just because of government changes the parents have been charged a fee of K50.00 but not completed. We also had some problems like teachers' strike and all these so they have not paid. They are not paying up quickly and they are still delaying. That's the problem we are facing now but everything is still ok. When we call the PNC meetings they do attend. If it is in the village or in the remote areas parents do come and work in given days. But this is a town school and parents are coming back and when we ask for fees to do certain things like getting a loan mower or buying fuel, they help us.

What do you mean by PNC?

It means parents and citizens and they involve in these jobs. They are parents and citizens.

Tell me about the curriculum that you are using at the school?

The curriculum has changed and some of us who have been teaching for long time still need to catch up with the new curriculum reform. Just same type of curriculum which we are only teaching seven subjects. We are still learning and this is now the third year of teaching the new curriculum. We are still learning to use the new format. The old type of curriculum that we learned involves programs and all that, it is still ok and curriculum must be written like pupil's books and all that. But now everything has to come from the teacher. The teacher has to do a lot of research, do a lot of programs before you go and teach. But a lot of teaching aids. Before program was a bit ok because some of these things like using English and other things were provided. Now it all comes from the teachers' research and some of them are still being printed.

Do you think this curriculum is meeting the needs of children with disabilities?

It has gone back to community based and it is still with children with disability problems and it is very nice. But most of the latest curriculum that they have not relates back to the community and things that are around us. The teacher has to provide everything and the teacher has to do a lot for research. Yes it works in our community.

Can you tell me about the assessment?

We are having assessment everyday. We are doing assessment on everything. We are doing assessment on students behavior, students' punctuality. We have student profiles, and what we are doing is collect them and feed them with the profiles and all those are assessments.

Everything is coming back to the school. We have to keep the records and every teaching we do is worth assessment.

After assessing when you get the results, what kind of changes do you make?

After assessment everyday, when a particular unit is not taught and when students score low marks or children not performing well, we try to program and help the child again and we do the project again and if the child has not done it, then go back and do it again. The child has to really learn it properly because before she leaves school after the day, she must do that one and go back home. For instance, in home economics baking a flour, if he has not the flour then he tell him to do it again.

Do you feel confident when children with disabilities are in your school? What is your confidence like?

I have sympathy or sorry for them so I try my best to go and see them first or some times I have priority for them so that he ore she can feel that she or he is with the rests of he students in the class. If ignore because of his disability problem or all that I make sure that I must be with he group all the time. Some times I give priority on the little problems I give like playing games. I give priority like people with disability problems play first or we put them under priority list so that they feel that they are part of the group.

Well Mr.   we are coming towards the end of our interview session so do you have any really last comments to make about special education and inclusive education in Papua New Guinea as well as your school?

The teachers that are around now are not really trained in the area of special education when they are educating he current ones in teachers' colleges and all these, they should teach them properly so that when they come graually we are taking in graduates an they should have those ideas and when they come in they should have experience teachers and give the class with the teachers with disability experience so that with the small techniques that they have they can implement them.. Otherwise, some schools with old and only few teachers they will find this problem of especially teaching students with discipline problems or disabilities. Those of us who have attended these in-services we have attended various schools to cater for the disabilities like I have been in a school in Port Moresby where there are children with eye problems, hear problems. Sitting in that classroom I have seen children doing all these writing, what they use, they play and all that they do. I really feel like to watch them. But there needs to be more trained teachers in all these schools in special and inclusive education.

Well Mr.   thank you much for the information that you have given me. Thank you very much for your time.

Repetitive Teaching
& Assessment ✓

Task Analysis
— step by step
— outcome based.

Confidence re
teach in inclusive
classroom

Giving Preferences
to Chn with
disabilities

. . .

College Training
— teacher competences
— confidence
— skills

Old Time Teachers
have less ideas

New Graduates
have more good
ideas

Need for
Teacher Training &
Retraining.

Source: After Creswell (2005, p.213).

Appendix F: Sample observation protocol and coding
(there will be 3 minutes interval)

AN OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL
(there will be 3 minutes interval)

Observational fieldnotes for: _____

Setting: _____ Primary Gr. 6 Yellow

Observer: _____ John Rombo

Role of observer: _____ Non-participant

Time: _____ 9:30 am

Date: _____ 23/05/06

Length of observation: _____

TIME am/pm	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT/ACION/PRACTICE	RESEARCHER REFLECTIVE NOTES *(insights, hunches, themes)*
9:30am	When I came in the chn did sign language and it seems "Good morning, Mr. Rombo, God bless you". It was interesting. All chn did the sign language	sign language ...
9:33 am	One child moved from one table to the other. A group of boys were playing & goofing. One child(boys) stood up and did not care about anything. All girls were very quiet. The same boy kept standing. Tr. was busy on the board. Tr. used red and yellow chalk to write on the board.	Boys playing up All girls quiet Teacher paid less attention
9:36 am	One girl looked at other chn through the window. A boy stood up and did not concentrate. Tr. paid less attention thinking their chn were doing their work.	Teacher paid little attention not respected

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Time	Observation	Interpretation
9:39 am	Tr. continued to write on the board while chn. copied. A child could not see the board so went closer to the board. Tr. paid less attention to the child. Some chn. talked openly. A boy was peeping out to see the board.	Teacher did not meet individual child needs. Teacher paid little attention
9:42 am	A boy stood up (some boys) to copy notes. Another boy stood up & walked around. This exercise book had less writing. Most boys were mucking around. Two boys stood up to carefully look at the board.	Boys misbehaved. Teacher paid less attention
9:45 am	A boy stood up for 4 minutes, another one stood up to see the board. Tr. used coloured chalk to write. Another boy was talking to his friend. 2 boys joined in. Tr. was busy in her table. Most girls were quiet.	Teacher using inappropriate teaching aids to meet chn's needs. e.g. coloured chalk.
9:48 am	Tr. continued to write on the board while chn. copied notes. A boy became restless among some chn and ... There was interaction & group discussion. Tr. watched the chn. went around directing. Most chn were on task. Tr. directed them "you should be on exercise ..."	Teacher and children interaction was minimal. Teacher continued lesson.
9:51 am	Tr. forgot to write a sentence & said "There is one more thing that I did not write". She wrote again while chn. watched. A child looked over another's work. Chn asked for items.	Chn. sought peer help instead of tr. why? Tr. paid less attention

Source: After Creswell (2005, p.213).

9:54 am	Tr. continued to write on the board. A child pinched another. Two boys played. All children were on task. A child banged on another child's head. The other one put his hand on the other's head. Most girls were quiet in class. 3 boys stood at the same time to see the board.	Behaviour problem boys threatening and noisy
9:57 am	Tr. closed the door which had been opened for so long. A child went to another child to grab an eraser. Tr. only looked at her book to write notes on the board. Tr. continued to write notes while children copied. A boy argued with the other to be quiet.	children went out of control teacher did little
10:00 am	Tr. kept writing notes on the board while children copied. A child could not see the board well so he stood up. Another one went out unasked. Two boys played around with rulers. Tr. did not take notice. Tr. kept looking at the book to copy notes.	teacher unfair lesson No interaction between Tr. & Chn.
10:03 am	Tr. continued to write on the board. Some chn. played so she said quiet. Tr. used different colour of chalk. Few boys took time to read the board b'cos of colour. A boy went from one end of the classroom to another then he went out not asking for.	chn. found it hard to read the board of using chalk Children's needs not met.
10:06 am	Tr. introduced another exercise. Tr. explained in pidgin what she means in English. Some chn. put their hands up. Tr. corrected the chn. A child gave a wrong answer. All chn. corrected him. The child was the one who talked the most in classroom.	Tr. uses local language for transition End of Observation

Source: After Creswell (2005, p.213).

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Appendix G: University of Waikato ethical approval letter

MEMORANDUM

To: **John Rombo**
Cc: **Rosina Merry**

From: Dr Rosemary De Luca
        For School of Education Research Ethics Committee

Date: 7 June 2006

Subject: Research Ethics Approval

The School of Education Research Ethics Committee considered your revised application for ethical approval for the research proposal:

School Cultural Factors and Practices that Influence Inclusive Education in Papua New Guinea: A Consideration of Schools in Southern Highlands Province.

I am pleased to advise that this revised application has received ethical approval.

The Committee wishes you all the best with your research.

Dr Rosemary De Luca
Chairperson
For School of Education Research Ethics Committee

Appendix H: Consent letters
(a) Letter for Schools

John L. Rombo
Flat 6/8
Scotland Place
Hillcrest
HAMILTON 2001
New Zealand

03rd May, 2006

The Principal
……………. Primary School
P.O.Box 69
Mendi
Southern Highlands Province
Papua New Guinea

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBJECT: SEEKING CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL.

My name is John Rombo and I am a Master of Education student at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. As part of my study, I am required to undertake a research project, which is being planned to be conducted in Southern Highlands Province in Papua New Guinea. Your school was chosen as one of the participating schools for the study. This letter therefore, serves to formally seek your consent for the execution of the study which is being planned to be conducted around mid July, 2006. The actual date of the research will be communicated to you in due course.

The research topic is as follows: "*School cultural factors and practices that influence inclusive education in Papua New Guinea: A consideration of schools in Southern Highlands Province*".

This study is aimed at investigating what school cultural factors and practices influence the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classrooms in your school. This will be done by way of investigating the classroom teachers' and the school administrators' perspectives and experiences. The need for this study has arisen out of my personal experiences with the students with special needs in primary schools, high schools, secondary schools and even at the tertiary levels of education in Papua New Guinea. As seen in the Papua New Guinea society, people with special needs are given less recognition in terms of providing opportunities in education, health, social welfare and other means to enhance their wellbeing. From my teaching experiences, it is evident

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that schools in Southern Highlands Province and Papua New Guinea at large provide minimal or no opportunities for the education of children with special needs in the regular classrooms. Therefore, through this study the school cultural factors and practices that influence inclusive education can be identified and where possible suggest ways to ensure that students with special needs are given equal recognition based on the principles of social justice, rights, equality, fairness and normalization, and regard such students as human beings in schools and the society at large.

During the study, three methods of data collection will be used. First, teachers and the school administrators will be interviewed on individual basis using a semi-structured interview schedule. Then where possible group interviews will be conducted to gauge collective views on the inclusion of students with special needs in your school. Individual interviews will take about 40 minutes whilst the group interviews will take less than 40 minutes. Second, a non-participant observation will be conducted. This will be done during staff meetings, supervisory meetings, strand meetings, or other cluster group meetings that may be conducted in your school. Permission to observe in these meetings will be initially sought from you as the school principal or another person in charge. Third, some documents pertaining to inclusive education that may be in your school such as national or school policies, rules and regulations, meeting minutes and resolutions will be collected and analyzed. Full consent will be sought from you or someone who is in charge of these documents like the archives person, if any. Through the use of the three data collection methods, it is hoped that the school cultural factors and practices that contribute to the inclusion of students with special needs can be identified for improvement of the current education system in Southern Highlands Province and Papua New Guinea at large.

Be informed that during the entire research process, your school and the research participants will be respected as much as possible. That means the individual name(s) of your school or the participants will not be mentioned in the write-up but a code name or group representations will be used. As the study will take three weeks, the participants may withdraw from the study during or at the end of the first week. After the first week into the research, all participants will be deemed to be comfortable to take part in the study, which will lead to the completion of the research project. After the data collection, the participants will have an opportunity to look through the data; both tape-recorded and hand-written transcripts for verification purposes. When the study is completed, one copy of a hard bound thesis will be sent to your school as part of the ethical research process.

The following people are my research supervisors and they can be contacted on the following contact details for further information or questions regarding this study:

Rosina Merry	Associate Professor Richard Coll
Principal Supervisor	Co-supervisor
University of Waikato	University of Waikato
School of Education	Centre for Science and
Department of Professional Studies in Education	Technology Education Research
Private Bag 3105	Private Bag 3105
HAMILTON 2001	HAMILTON 2001
New Zealand	New Zealand
Phone: (647) 8384875	Phone: (647) 8384100
Facsimile: (647) 8384875	Facsimile: (647) 8384218
E-mail: rosinam@waikato.ac.nz	E-mail: r.coll@waikato.ac.nz

Find enclosed is the University of Waikato Ethics Committee approval letter for the research, a sample interview schedule, and other information related to the study.

For your consideration and approval.

Yours faithfully,

………………………

JOHN L. ROMBO (Mr)
Master of Education student
Phone: (647) 8584158
Facsimile: (647) 8384269
E-mail: jlr15@waikato.ac.nz

_____

Please state your full name and sign here to show that you have read and understood this letter.

Name: ………………………………………….

Position at School: ……………………………..

Signature: ………………………………………

_____

Appendix I: Consent letters

(b) Letter for the Southern Highlands Provincial Education Division in Papua New Guinea

John L. Rombo
Flat 6/8
Scotland Place
Hillcrest
HAMILTON 2001
New Zealand

03rd May, 2006

The Provincial Education Advisor
Southern Highlands Provincial Education Division
P.O.Box 68
MENDI
Southern Highlands Province
Papua New Guinea

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBJECT: SEEKING CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN FIVE SCHOOLS IN SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE.

My name is John Rombo and I am a Master of Education student at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. As part of my study, I am required to undertake a research project, which is being planned to be conducted in your province in Papua New Guinea. Five schools in Southern Highlands Province were chosen to take part in the study. This letter therefore, serves to formally seek your consent for the execution of the study which is being planned to be conducted around mid July, 2006. The actual date of the research will be communicated to you in due course once the approval is granted by the University of Waikato through the Research Ethics Committee.

The research topic is as follows: "*School cultural factors and practices that influence inclusive education in Papua New Guinea: A consideration of schools in Southern Highlands Province*".

This study is aimed at investigating what school cultural factors and practices influence the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classrooms. This will be done by way of investigating the classroom teachers' and the school administrators' perspectives and experiences. The need for this study has arisen out of my personal experiences with the students with special needs in primary schools, high schools, secondary schools and even at the tertiary levels of education in Papua New Guinea. As seen in the Papua New Guinea society, people with special needs are given less

recognition in terms of providing opportunities in education, health, social welfare and other means to enhance their wellbeing. From my teaching experiences, it is evident that schools in Southern Highlands Province and Papua New Guinea at large provide minimal or no opportunities for the education of children with special needs in the regular classrooms. Therefore, through this study the school cultural factors and practices that influence inclusive education can be identified and where possible suggest ways to ensure that students with special needs are given equal recognition based on the principles of social justice, rights, equality, fairness and normalization, and regard such students as human beings in schools and the society at large.

During the study, three methods of data collection will be used. First, teachers and the administrators will be interviewed on individual basis using a semi-structured interview schedule. Then where possible group interviews will be conducted to gauge collective views on the inclusion of students with special needs in regular classrooms. Individual interviews will take about 40 minutes whilst the group interviews will take less than 40 minutes. Second, a non-participant observation will be conducted. This will be done during staff meetings, supervisory meetings, strand meetings, or other cluster group meetings that may be conducted in the selected schools. Permission to observe in these meetings will be initially sought from the school principal or another person in charge. Third, some documents pertaining to inclusive education that may be in the selected schools such as national or school policies, rules and regulations, meeting minutes and resolutions will be collected and analyzed. Full consent will be sought from the school principal or someone who is in charge of these documents like the archives person, if any. Through the use of the three data collection methods, it is hoped that the school cultural factors and practices that contribute to the inclusion of students with special needs can be identified for improvement of the current education system in Southern Highlands Province and Papua New Guinea at large.

Be informed that during the entire research process, all the participating schools and the research participants will be respected as much as possible. That means individual name(s) of school or the participants will not be mentioned in the write-up but a code name or group representations will be used. As the study will take three weeks, the participants may withdraw from the study during or at the end of the first week. After the first week into the research, all participants will be deemed to be comfortable to take part in the study, which will lead to the completion of the research project. After the data collection, the participants will have an opportunity to look through the data; both tape-recorded and hand-written transcripts for verification purposes. When the study is completed, one copy of a hard bound thesis will be sent to each of the participating schools as part of the ethical research process.

The following people are my research supervisors and they can be contacted on the following contact details for further information or questions regarding this study:

Rosina Merry
Principal Supervisor
University of Waikato
School of Education
Department of Professional Studies in Education
Private Bag 3105
HAMILTON 2001
New Zealand
Phone: (647) 8384875
Facsimile: (647) 8384875
E-mail: rosinam@waikato.ac.nz

Associate Professor Richard Coll
Co-supervisor
University of Waikato
Centre for Science and
Technology Education Research
Private Bag 3105
HAMILTON 2001
New Zealand
Phone: (647) 8384100
Facsimile: (647) 8384218
E-mail: r.coll@waikato.ac.nz

Find enclosed is the University of Waikato Ethics Committee approval letter for the research, a sample interview schedule, and other information related to the study.

For your consideration and approval.

Yours faithfully,

………………………

JOHN L. ROMBO (Mr)
Master of Education student
Phone: (647) 8584158
Facsimile: (647) 8384269
E-mail: jlr15@waikato.ac.nz

_____

Please state your full name and sign here to show that you have read and understood this letter.

Name: …………………………………………..

Position in the Province: ……………………..

Signature: …………………………………….

_____

Appendix J: Permission to conduct research in Southern Highlands Province

Mr John L Rombo
School of Education
University of Waikato
Private Mail Bag 3105
Hamilton 2001
New Zealand

Southern Highlands Province

10th July, 2006.

Dear Mr. Rombo

RE : PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT YOUR RESEARCH IN FOUR SCHOOLS

This serves to acknowledge your letter of request to carry out your research in four of our schools in this Province, I here by grant you full permission to carry out your research in four of our schools. The schools are as follows: Kumin Primary School, Tente Primary School, St. Clares Primary School and Ialibu Admin Primary School. I understand you have already written to these schools and I am pretty sure they are aware of your coming.

We thank you for choosing our schools to do your research and I hope you will successfully complete your research. Should you require any assistance please do not hesitate to call into our office.

10/07/06

FRANCIS YOKE
Provincial Education Advisor & Chairman PEB

Appendix K: Consent letters

(c)   Letter for the National Department of Education in Papua New Guinea: National Research Division

John L. Rombo
Flat6/8
Scotland Place
Hillcrest
HAMILTON 2001
New Zealand

03rd May, 2006

The Director
National Department of Education
Research, Policy and Communication Division
Research and Evaluation Section
P.O.Box 446
WAIGANI
National Capital District
Papua New Guinea

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBJECT: SEEKING CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN FIVE SCHOOLS IN SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE.

My name is John Rombo and I am a Master of Education student at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. As part of my study, I am required to undertake a research project, which is being planned to be conducted in Southern Highlands Province in Papua New Guinea. Five schools were chosen to take part in the study. This letter therefore, serves to formally seek your consent for the execution of the study which is being planned to be conducted around mid July, 2006. The actual date of the research will be communicated to you in due course once the research is approved by the University of Waikato School of Education Research Ethics Committee.

The research topic is as follows: "*School cultural factors and practices that influence inclusive education in Papua New Guinea: A consideration of schools in Southern Highlands Province*".

This study is aimed at investigating what school cultural factors and practices influence the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classrooms. This will be done by way of investigating the classroom teachers' and the school administrators' perspectives and experiences. The need for this study has arisen out of my personal experiences with the students with special needs in primary schools, high schools,

secondary schools and even at the tertiary levels of education in Papua New Guinea. As seen in the Papua New Guinea society, people with special needs are given less recognition in terms of providing opportunities in education, health, social welfare and other means to enhance their wellbeing. From my teaching experiences, it is evident that schools in Southern Highlands Province and Papua New Guinea at large provide minimal or no opportunities for the education of children with special needs in the regular classrooms. Therefore, through this study the school cultural factors and practices that influence inclusive education can be identified and where possible suggest ways to ensure that students with special needs are given equal recognition based on the principles of social justice, rights, equality, fairness and normalization, and regard such students as human beings in schools and the society at large.

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Be informed that during the entire research process, the participating schools and the research participants will be respected as much as possible. That means individual name(s) of the schools or the participants will not be mentioned in the write-up but a code name or group representations will be used. As the study will take three weeks, the participants may withdraw from the study during or at the end of the first week. After the first week into the research, all participants will be deemed to be comfortable to take part in the study, which will lead to the completion of the research project. After the data collection, the participants will have an opportunity to look through the data; both tape-recorded and hand-written transcripts for verification purposes. When the study is completed, one copy of a hard bound thesis will be sent to each of the participating schools as part of the ethical research process.

The following people are my research supervisors and they can be contacted on the following contact details for further information or questions regarding this study:

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Principal Supervisor   Co-supervisor
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Department of Professional Studies in Education   Technology Education Research
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Facsimile: (647) 8384875   Facsimile: (647) 8384218
E-mail: rosinam@waikato.ac.nz   E-mail: r.coll@waikato.ac.nz

Find enclosed is the University of Waikato Ethics Committee approval letter for the
research, a sample interview schedule, and other information related to the study.

For your consideration and approval.

Yours faithfully,

………………………

JOHN L. ROMBO (Mr)
Master of Education student
Phone: (647) 8584158
Facsimile: (647) 8384269
E-mail: jlr15@waikato.ac.nz

_____

Please state your full name and sign here to show that you have read and understood this letter.

Name: …………………………………………………………………………...

Position at the National Department of Education:
………………………………………..

Signature:
………………………………………………………………………………..

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Appendix L: Approval letter for research from the Department of Education

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Department of Education

Office of the Deputy Secretary Administration and Policy

TELEPHONE: (675) 301 3529/3526	FINCORP HAUS
TELEGRAMS: TLX NE22193	P.O. Box 446
TELEX: NE22193	WAIGANI 131
FAX: 301 3544	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Email: luke_taita@educationpng.gov.pg	File: PR1-1-2
	Date 3rd July 2006

School Of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Mail Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Dear John Rombo

Your research proposal titled: *"School cultural factors and practices that influence inclusive education in Papua New Guinea. A consideration of schools in Southern Highlands Province"* has been approved in principle prior to Research and Evaluation Steering Committee (RESC) next meeting. The approval in principle is given due to the urgency of your data collection and presentation of final report for the award of your nominated degree program. Use this letter as an approval for your data collection in your appointed institutions and provinces.

While your research is approved in principle to collect data in educational institution/s it is also subject to approval by the Provincial Research Committee (where applicable) and/or the Provincial Education Advisor or the principals or head teachers of your nominated institutions. It is your responsibility to ensure such is obtained prior to the field work.

In serious case of breach of ethical issues and DOE research guidelines the Department of Education reserves the right to inform the researchers home institution or sponsors directly and take necessary actions as deem necessary.
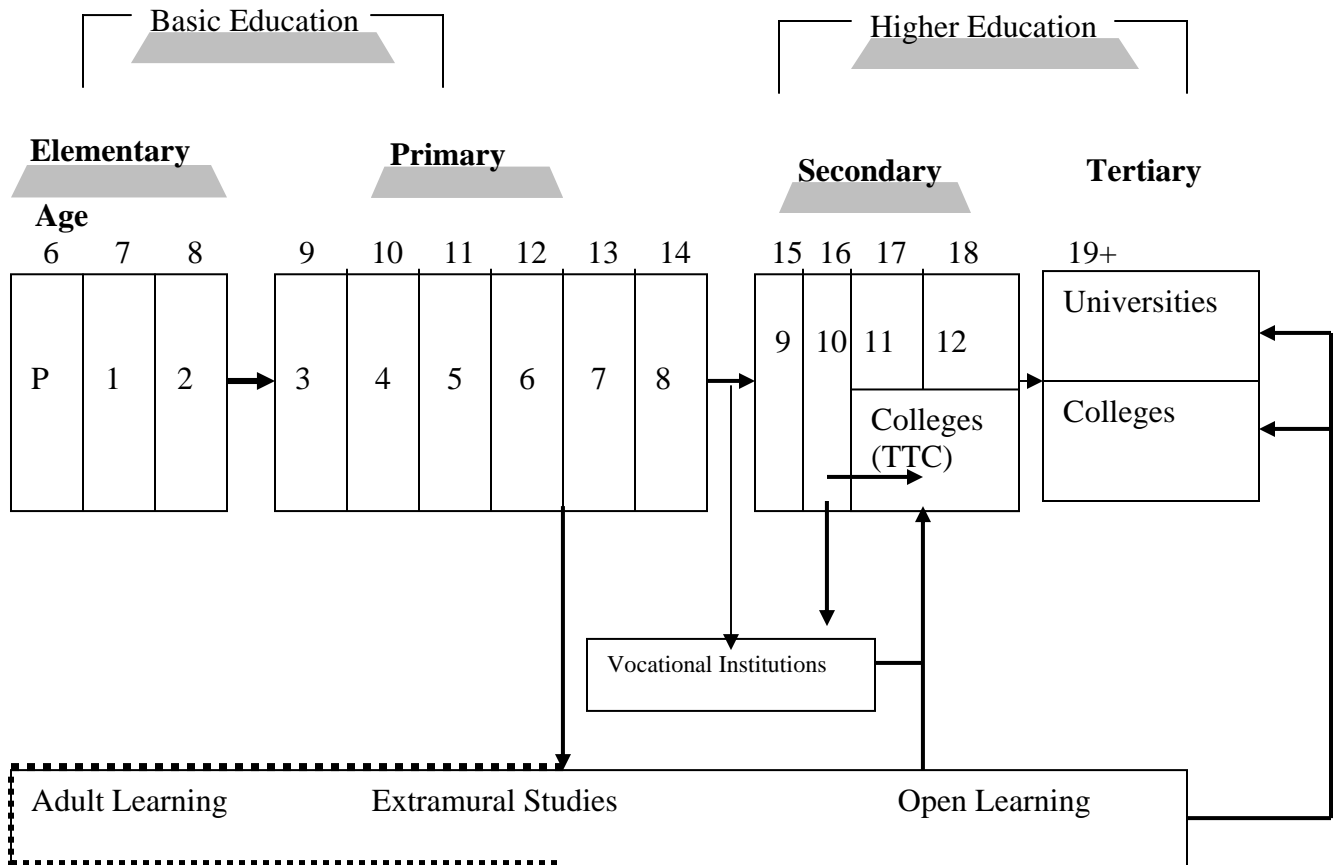
Failure to observe the above conditions may lead to the withdrawal of research approval.

I thankyou and wish you good luck in your study

Luke Taita
Deputy Secretary Policy and Administration
and Chairman of Research and Evaluation Steering Committee

cc. Director - REU

Appendix M: Papua New Guinea education reform structure

Basic Education

Higher Education

Elementary

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary

Age

| 6 | 7 | 8 | | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | | 19+ |

Universities

| P | 1 | 2 | → | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | → | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

Colleges (TTC)

Colleges

Vocational Institutions

Adult Learning   Extramural Studies   Open Learning

Source: Department of Education (2002a, p. 26).