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TITLE OF THE RESEARCH

**THE OPERATION OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION UNITS
IN REGULAR SCHOOLS AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES
FOR SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE AMPARA
DISTRICT**

**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted mainly to investigate the practice of the Special Education Unit (SEU) system in regular schools in the Ampara District and its way forward to support the inclusive education system. Moreover, to analyze the wide range of factors that promote and hinder the operation of the SEU system in regular schools and to find out the perceptions and thoughts of stakeholders such as principals, teachers, administrators, and parents about the SEU and its scope in the future. Finally, to identify the best practices and develop recommendations to promote the SEU system as a vehicle towards inclusive education in the Ampara District. The methodology of the study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Purposive sampling techniques were applied to select 27 principals, seven Additional Directors/ISAs of Special Education, and 86 SEU teachers. Five parents of children with special educational needs from each Education Zone were also selected using the random lottery sampling method from the Ampara District. The questionnaire, interview schedule, observation schedule, and focus group discussion were utilized for data collection. SPSS and content analysis techniques were used for analyzing the collected data in this study. The findings of the study indicated that the experience, knowledge, and attitude of teachers and principals and other professionals who worked in the SEU system are beneficial for the practice of the inclusive education system in the Ampara District. Parents, INGOs and NGOs favor implementing the inclusive education system by enhancing the practice of the SEU system. Some of the schools with SEUs have resource rooms, school-level policy, and adapted curriculum which can support to implement inclusive education. However, findings revealed that teachers need more training regarding inclusive strategies to teach in an inclusive classroom. Moreover, awareness programmes have to be conducted for stakeholders about the inclusive education system. Therefore, the study has supported to achieve the aim of the study and recommended future developments of SEU system and Inclusive education in the Ampara District.