

Influence of Psychosocial Correlates on Learning Disability in School Going Children

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Abstract

Children with Learning disability show academic difficulties to intellectual capacities. A significant percentage of school age children worldwide are diagnosed with dyslexia being the most common children with SLD exhibit both internalized depressive and anxiety disorders self-esteem eating and self-difficulties and externalized problem including difficulties in socializing developing friendships, and delinquent behaviour. Socioeconomic status is strongly associated with the cognitive ability and achievement during childhood. Moreover, research has shown that children with learning disability have the average (above average) intelligence, and their poor academic performance is due to some psychosocial factors such as lack of effective learning strategies, lack of awareness about learning disability, negative parental attitude, lack of awareness about intervention etc. The major objective of the review is to investigate the global learning disability of school children and study how Psychosocial factors effects the child learning.

Keywords: Learning Disability, Psychological factors. Sociological factors, Role of intervention.

Introduction

The term Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) refers to deficits that generally affect a person's academic ability. Specifically, they concern difficulties in reading, writing and arithmetic that are not caused by developmental, neurological, sensory, motor or mental disorders. (Bontiet.al. 2020). Children with Learning Disabilities have typical intelligence but show deficits in reading (Dyslexia) and/or mathematics (Dyscalculia) (Bonti,Kamari, Kougioumtzis,Theofilidis, &Sofologi, 2020) and writing (Dysgrafia) and there is usually comorbidity with other disorders that involve attention, language, and behaviour. Cortiella and Horowitz (2014).

According to Selikowitz (2012) Special Learning Disabilities can be defined as “an unexpected and unexplained condition that affects a child of average, or above average intelligence, characterized a significant delay in one or more areas of learning”. The diagnosis of the learning disability is based on low performance on one or more standardized tests of language related to the comprehension, or expression of language (Stanford and Delage 2019).Difficulties linked to Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), are the result of cognitive deficits which include difficulties in attention, problems in memorizing, and poor speed to process knowledge. They usually lead to inaccuracies in reading or slow reading in spite of the student putting a great amount of effort, poor reading comprehension skills,

written expression without precision and clarity, number facts appear difficult to remember, and mathematical reasoning which lacks accuracy (Stanford and Delage, 2019).

The concept of learning disability is still new in many developing countries. However, India has a history of research in this area. Disciplines have been involved, such as education, Psychology, paediatrics, speech, hearing and Psychiatry. Conducting studies of learning disability in India is not an easy task because of its multilingual and multicultural background. There are many associated features of SLD that are specific to the Indian contexts. These include the fact that multilingualism is a common occurrence, classroom conditions are far from ideal and socioeconomic factors play a more significant role. Karanth and Rozario (2003) has enumerated various environmental factors that are associated with SLD viz. poverty, lack of literary resources in the home environment, lack of access to preschool instruction, parental illiteracy, overcrowded classrooms and poor instruction. The psychological research established that poverty is a powerful risk factor for poor developmental outcomes and poor cognitive and school performances (Smith, Fauth & Brooks (2001).

As stated by Mehta and Swarup (2004), Children, especially in cities in India, learn through English which is the medium of instruction and most often this is not the child's mother tongue. Bilingualism, another characteristic feature of the Indian educational system, also aggravates the problems for dyslexics in India. A sub group of dyslexics in the country are faced with a dual problem - one dealing with perceptual problem and the other dealing with the language aspect". Children who are language learners are sometimes misidentified as having learning disability. As these children are from poor family background. They initially find it hard to complete with their fellow students who hail from sound educational background. The main cause for scholastic backwardness was found to be faulty parental attitude, poor motivation for studies. Besides psychological stress due to fear of school activities and teacher, isolation among friends, rejection by teachers and difficulties in school subjects etc greatly contribute towards the problem of learning difficulty. Woolfson, Grant & Campbell (2007). Claim that connection between teacher's beliefs and their behaviours in the classroom are linked to personal beliefs, values and principles. Research demonstrates that increased experience and contact with students with special educational needs in conjunction with knowledge and training, results in more positive attitudes Lambe & Bones (2006). Research has also shown negative correlations between negative attitudes and poor or ineffective instructional strategies Das, Kuyini & Desai (2013).

Gandhimathi (2010) in their article titled, Awareness about learning disabilities among the Primary school teachers concluded that the level of awareness about learning disability among primary school is low. Since primary level teachers play a vital role in educating a child, it is essential that the Bachelors of Education or Teachers training programme should equip the teachers with specific abilities to identify the different types of learning difficulties, causative factors, development of instructional strategies, media and materials, adopting the developed remedial strategies along with guidance and counselling.

Moreover, reviews have shown a connection between Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) and both internalizing (such as anxiety, depression) and externalizing issues (such as anger and delinquency). These problematic behaviours affect the normality of social and psychological development of children with learning difficulties. Literature emphasizes that there is high comorbidity between SLD and internalizing problems. Low academic performance at school can worsen these problems and increase

their prevalence. Literature review reveals that a series of studies have shown that there has been an association between poor school achievement or Learning Disabilities and low self-esteem. It has been found that 70% of students with learning difficulties have low self-perception (Padeliadu, 2011).

Conclusion

Students with Specific Learning Disabilities fail to engage in self-regulation activities and do not comprehend the usefulness of such strategies in their learning process. They also have a false attribution of failure or success; therefore, it is important to be taught that both failure and success depend on their efforts (Santrock, 2020). However, there has been a lack of sufficient engagement and practice of intervening strategies, as far as the school environment is concerned, due to several limitations, such as time, resources and teacher training in assessment and intervention in students with LD. Frequently, children with Learning Disabilities have the required mental abilities to cope with school material, but do not develop the appropriate strategies that allow them to combine the already existing knowledge with the new data, to build new knowledge. Thus, for example, they do not develop effective strategies for the decoding of language symbols; the processing of verbal stimuli; the relationship between them; the automation of arithmetic calculations, etc. The absence or incomplete development of such strategies imply the inability to build concepts, which makes the children's learning efforts even more difficult in the next step. Consequently, it is very important to apply some intervention strategies to help children with these difficulties (Padeliadu, 2011).

Firstly, self-regulation plays an important role in emphasizing that poor academic performance depends on their efforts and the strategies that accompany the learning process. The most effective self-regulation techniques are self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-instruction, self-reinforcement, and goal setting activities (Reid et.al., 2013).

Teachers need to have the appropriate training and knowledge on how to intervene; in order to emotionally and socially support children with Learning Disabilities. Extra-curricular activities may also help students in practicing their social skills and gaining self-esteem (Cavioni et al., 2017).

Regardless of parents' and teachers' work to help a child achieve academic success, the fact that many children with Learning Disabilities are repeatedly disappointed and lack progress can result in what is known as "learned helplessness." Learned helplessness occurs, after someone has experienced unpleasant situations repeatedly, which leads them to believe that they are unable to change those situations (Pandy,2012).

Intervention plans are used to reduce such problem that may affect the student or others which disruption to the training program in classroom. Intervention helps in guiding parents of positive interaction with their children. They are encouraged to reinforce their children's suitable behaviour for maintaining harmony, monitor them effectively, and engage in effective conflict resolution strategies with them. An early understanding of source of contributory component of learning disability may help tracing effect effective policies and strategies may reduce behaviour disturbances in school.

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