

Awareness of Specific Learning Disorder Among Lower Primary School Teachers in Government Schools of Delhi

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Abstract

Specific Learning Disorder (SLD) is a neurodevelopmental condition affecting children's capacity to read, write, and perform mathematical operations despite adequate intelligence, instruction, and educational opportunity. Early identification depends critically on teacher awareness, particularly in resource-constrained government school settings. The present study aimed to assess SLD awareness among lower primary school teachers in government schools of Delhi. A cross-sectional descriptive design was adopted. One hundred lower primary school teachers (Classes I–V) were recruited through purposive sampling. A validated, self-structured 30-item questionnaire administered via Google Forms comprising of two sections: 15 Yes/No items (Section B) and 15 Multiple Choice Questions (Section C). Results revealed a high overall mean awareness of 91.6%. Item-wise analysis showed that while conceptual awareness was strong, all participants correctly identified the importance of early support and the teacher's role in identification of specific functional identification skills were comparatively weaker, most notably the recognition of oral reading avoidance as a behavioral indicator of reading difficulty (61%). An independent-samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference in awareness scores between formally trained and untrained teachers. Likewise, there was no significant effect of teaching experience on awareness. The study has direct implications on Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, particularly in designing teacher-speech language pathologist (SLP) collaborative training programs and school-based SLD screening frameworks.

Keywords: specific learning disorder, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, teacher awareness, government schools, Delhi, lower primary education, speech-language pathology

Introduction

Reading the first page of a child's school report often carries quiet confidence for a classroom teacher until a pattern begins to surface. Letter reversals. Numbers that refuse to align. Sentences a child can speak fluently but cannot put on paper. These signals, routinely dismissed in crowded classrooms, may represent the earliest footprint of a SLD. The American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013) defines SLD as a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent difficulties in acquiring academic skills in

reading, written expression, or mathematics, despite adequate intelligence, instruction, and educational opportunity. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) classifies SLD into three specifiers: dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia, while the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) similarly recognizes these as developmental learning disorder subtypes [World Health Organization (WHO), 2019].

Globally, SLD affects approximately 5–15% of school-age children, making it among the most prevalent neurodevelopmental conditions in mainstream classrooms (Lyon et al., 2003; Shaywitz, 1998). Critically, Lyon et al. (2003) demonstrated that reading difficulties identified after second grade are significantly harder to remediate, underscoring the urgency of early classroom detection.

Geary (2004) drew attention to mathematical learning difficulties as particularly underrecognized, noting that numeracy errors are more readily attributed to insufficient practice than to underlying cognitive deficits — a pattern he termed the "hidden" nature of dyscalculia. Vellutino et al. (2004) further emphasized that reading disability is a highly heterogeneous condition requiring nuanced identification skills well beyond basic recognition of the term dyslexia. This complexity directly affects classroom practice; Joshi et al. (2009) found that elementary teachers were inadequately equipped to identify phonological processing deficits, a hallmark of dyslexia even after completing standard teacher education programs. This knowledge deficit is not resolved by experience or training alone. Moats (1994) established that accumulated classroom experience without explicit professional input does not reliably build structured knowledge of learning disabilities, while Washburn et al. (2011) demonstrated that completing training courses does not necessarily translate into stronger identification knowledge. Spear-Swerling and Cheesman (2012) further confirmed that even formally prepared teachers showed considerable gaps in applied SLD knowledge, suggesting that available training tends to build general familiarity rather than the functional, identification-focused competencies teachers need. Fletcher et al. (2019) synthesized these concerns by arguing that the SLD identification gap is fundamentally a knowledge gap. Teachers are positioned in the right context to observe struggling learners but often lack the specific functional knowledge to interpret what they observe. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2016) additionally emphasized that SLPs play a vital role in targeting the oral language and phonological processing deficits that directly underpin classroom reading, writing, and spelling challenges.

Within India, Ramaa (2000) estimated the prevalence of reading difficulties at 2.5–4% among Indian school children, with later assessments suggesting higher figures when broader SLD criteria are applied. Karande and Kulkarni (2005) highlighted how poor school performance is rarely linked to SLD at the teacher level, resulting in children being systematically mislabeled as dull or careless. Karande et al. (2011) observed that learning disorders consistently go undiagnosed across urban, semi-urban, and rural Indian classrooms due to limited baseline awareness among teachers and parents alike. Kamala and Ramganesha (2013) argued that evaluating teachers' functional knowledge of SLD is essential to avoid widespread misdiagnosis and to plan targeted teacher education. Ahmed (2015) further noted that India's multilingual context presents a structural barrier, given the severe scarcity of screening tools available across regional languages. Shari and Vranda (2015) assessed SLD awareness among primary teachers and found that while conceptual knowledge was generally adequate, functional identification knowledge pertaining to specific behavioral indicators and referral pathways was considerably weaker. Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie (2005) similarly found that veteran teachers were no more likely than novice teachers to correctly identify early indicators of reading disability, reinforcing that routine classroom exposure

alone creates a knowledge plateau rather than progressive competence. Padeliadu and Antoniou (2013) further observed that senior educators develop markedly uneven knowledge profiles depending on their individual professional development histories. Manasi (2023) argued that well-designed screening frameworks not only flag at-risk children but also raise teacher awareness, reduce stigma, and create structured referral pathways. Scaria et al. (2023) estimated that while SLD prevalence reaches up to 8% among Indian children, ground-level identification rates lag at less than 1% due to poor teacher awareness, missing screening tools, and social stigma, leaving students undetected through early primary school, elevating dropout risks by 2.5-fold, and exacerbating emotional difficulties and social isolation. Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) argued that closing this gap requires sustained, practice-embedded professional development that moves beyond awareness-level instruction toward structured, data-informed identification routines. India's legislative framework has progressively acknowledged SLD's impact. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD, 2016) explicitly included SLD among recognized conditions, mandating reasonable accommodations and classroom-based screenings, while National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) reinforced this through universal foundational literacy interventions and teacher training in inclusive education (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2020). Despite this scaffolding, ground-level implementation remains uneven and heavily reliant on individual teacher awareness and competence. Delhi's government school system offers a particularly relevant context for examining this problem. These schools serve predominantly lower-income populations where access to private diagnostic services is limited, class sizes are large, and teacher-to-student ratios are unfavorable. Lower primary teachers are the first sustained professional contact a child has with the educational system and are therefore strategically positioned to detect developmental patterns that deviate from expected learning trajectories. Yet, a few or limited studies have mapped the SLD awareness profile of this specific group in Delhi's government school context. The present study addresses this gap.

Need of the Study

Identification of SLD at the primary school level relies substantially on teachers' ability to recognize early indicators of learning difficulties and make appropriate referrals. In Delhi's government school system, where access to specialized assessment and intervention services may be limited, classroom teachers often play an important role in the early identification process. Although the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act (2016) and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasize inclusive education and support for children with learning difficulties, there is limited empirical evidence regarding SLD awareness among lower primary government school teachers in Delhi.

From the perspective of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, understanding teachers' awareness of SLD is relevant because SLPs contribute to the assessment and management of learning-related communication difficulties. Findings from the present study may help inform future teacher training initiatives, support the development of school-based referral practices, and provide preliminary evidence for strengthening collaboration between educators and SLPs professionals in educational settings.

Methodology

Aim

The aim of the present study is to assess the awareness of SLD among lower primary school teachers of Delhi, with particular focus on awareness related to reading, writing, and mathematical learning difficulties and to see the effect of formal training and years of experience on awareness scores.

Subjects

A total of 100 lower primary school teachers currently teaching children from Classes I to V in government schools across various districts (southwest and east) of Delhi, with varied years of teaching experience, constituted the study sample.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Teachers currently employed in Delhi government schools teaching lower primary classes (Classes I–V), willing to participate voluntarily, and capable of understanding English or Hindi were included in the study. Teachers working in private schools, those teaching only upper primary or secondary classes, special educators working exclusively in special education units, and respondents who submitted incomplete questionnaire responses were excluded.

Procedure

The study was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 involved preparation of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by drawing on supporting literature pertaining to SLD, classroom identification, and teacher awareness. A total of 30 items was constructed—15 Yes/No questions (Section B) and 15 Multiple Choice Questions (Section C) and subsequently validated by five practicing SLP's currently in clinical practice. Expert corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final version. The questionnaire was prepared in both English and Hindi to ensure adequate comprehension among participants. Section A collected socio-demographic information, including years of teaching experience and formal SLD training status. Phase 2 involved data collection. Participation was entirely voluntary, and prior informed consent was obtained from all participants. The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms, with complete anonymity and confidentiality maintained throughout. Each correct response in Sections B and C was scored 1; incorrect responses received 0, yielding a maximum possible score of 30 across both sections combined.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25). Item-wise frequency counts and percentages were calculated for each item in Sections B and C. A binomial test was applied to each item to determine whether the proportion of correct responses differed significantly from chance ($p = 0.50$ for Yes/No items; $p = 0.25$ for four-option MCQ items). Descriptive statistics including mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for overall SLD awareness across both sections individually and in combination. An independent-samples t-test was used to compare mean awareness scores between formally trained and untrained teachers. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of teaching experience on awareness scores across six experience categories. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all inferential analyses.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 showing Awareness (Yes/No) regarding SLD among lower primary school teachers

Awareness (Yes/No)	Frequency	Percentage	P Value	Significance
Are you aware of the term "Specific Learning Disorder"?	98	98.00%	<0.001	S
Are you aware that SLD includes difficulties in reading, writing, and mathematics?	98	98.00%	<0.001	S
Do you believe that early identification and support can help children with SLD improve academically?	100	100.00%	<0.001	S
Do you think classroom teachers play an important role in identifying children with SLD?	100	100.00%	<0.001	S
Do children with SLD require additional or specialized teaching support?	99	99.00%	<0.001	S
Do you think SLD can affect a child's academic performance even if the child is intelligent?	84	84.00%	<0.001	S
Do you believe SLD is caused only by lack of effort or laziness?*	86	86.00%	<0.001	S
Do you think SLD can be identified during the early primary school years (Classes I–III)?	88	88.00%	<0.001	S
Do you believe SLD can disappear on its own as the child grows older without any support?*	92	92.00%	<0.001	S
Do you think children with SLD should be sent to special schools only?*	77	77.00%	<0.001	S
Do you believe SLD can sometimes be related to genetic or brain-based factors?	92	92.00%	<0.001	S
Do you think children with SLD may feel low confidence in class?	85	85.00%	<0.001	S
If you identify a child with possible learning difficulties, would you refer the child to a specialist?	89	89.00%	<0.001	S
Children with reading difficulties may mix up similar-looking letters like b and d or p and q.	95	95.00%	<0.001	S

Some children may have specific difficulty in understanding numbers and performing arithmetic calculations.	100	100.00%	<0.001	S
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S= Significant

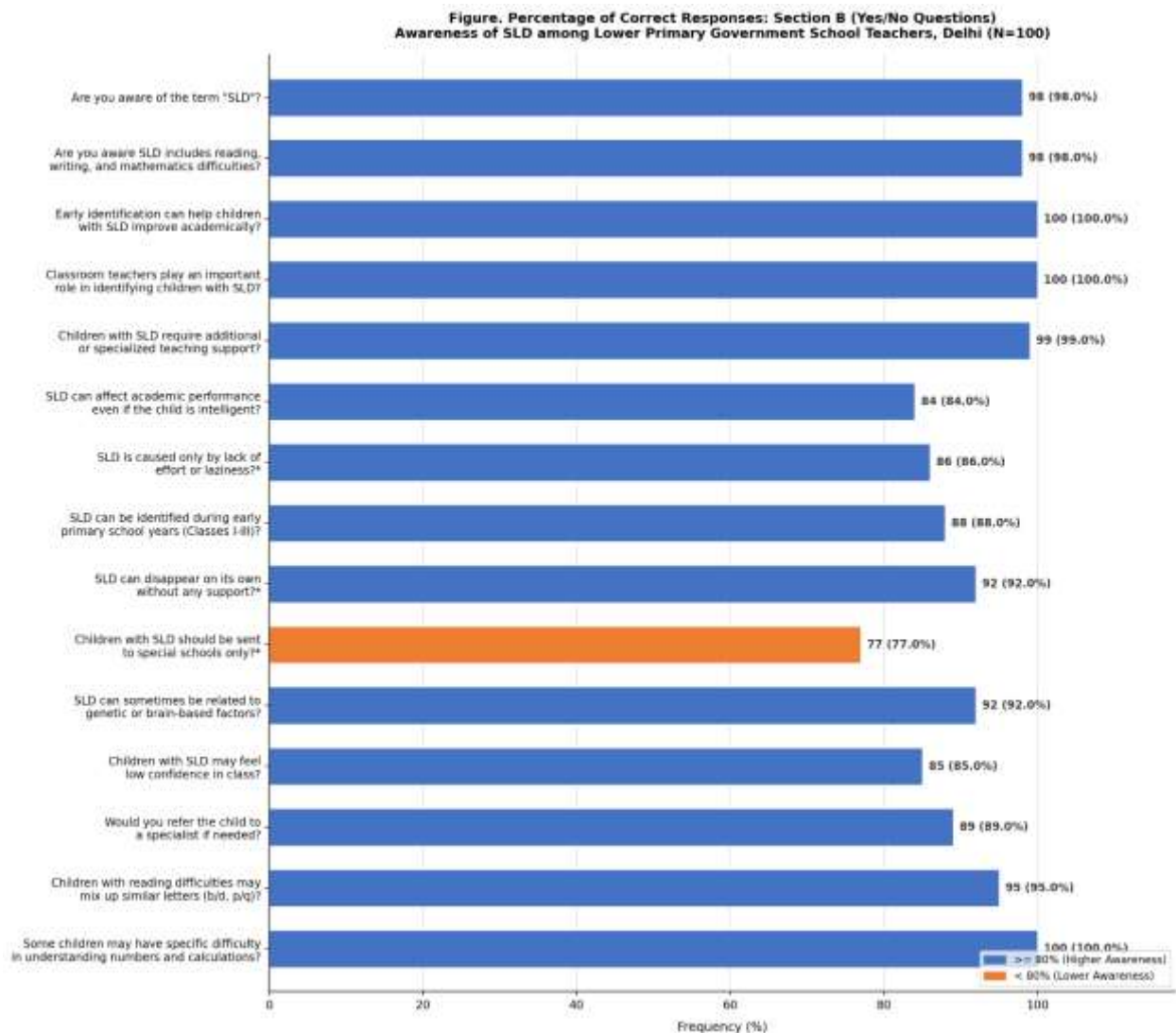


Figure 1 showing Awareness (Yes/No) regarding SLD among lower primary school teachers

Table 1 and Figure 1 show that awareness levels among lower primary school teachers on the Yes/No section were consistently high across all 15 items, with all items reaching statistical significance. The highest correct response rates were recorded for three items — early identification benefits children with SLD, the teacher's role in identification, and specific difficulty in arithmetic each scoring 100%. Awareness of SLD being related to genetic or brain-based factors and SLD not disappearing without support were both at 92%, followed by correct identification of early primary school-year detection at 88% and SLD not being caused by laziness at 86%. Items related to SLD affecting intelligent children (84%) and its impact on self-confidence (85%) showed slightly lower but still substantial awareness. The lowest correct response rate was observed for the item asking whether children with SLD should be sent

to special schools only, where only 77% of participants responded correctly (No), indicating that 23% of teachers still hold an exclusionary placement belief.

Table 2 showing awareness (MCQ) regarding specific learning disorders among lower primary school teachers

Awareness (MCQ)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	p-value	Significance
A child reads slowly and struggles to decode new words. This difficulty is mainly related to	95	95.00%	<0.001	S
A child avoids reading aloud in class repeatedly. This may indicate	61	61.00%	<0.001	S
Difficulty in understanding what was just read is mainly related to	95	95.00%	<0.001	S
Which classroom support can help a child with reading difficulty?	87	87.00%	<0.001	S
A child writes letters in incorrect sizes and spacing. This is mainly related to	96	96.00%	<0.001	S
Frequent spelling mistakes despite repeated practice may indicate difficulty in	88	88.00%	<0.001	S
Extremely slow copying from the board is mainly associated with	93	93.00%	<0.001	S
Which strategy can support a child struggling with written work?	94	94.00%	<0.001	S
Difficulty in organizing thoughts while writing mainly affects	90	90.00%	<0.001	S
A child struggles to understand number value (e.g., difference between 21 and 12). This mainly affects	93	93.00%	<0.001	S
Difficulty in remembering basic addition or multiplication facts indicates a problem in	97	97.00%	<0.001	S
Which classroom support may help a child struggling in mathematics?	96	96.00%	<0.001	S
Persistent difficulty in understanding basic mathematical concepts despite regular teaching may indicate	92	92.00%	<0.001	S
Difficulty understanding time, money, and measurement is commonly related to	90	90.00%	<0.001	S
If a child does not know the sounds of letters (phonics), this indicates difficulty in	99	99.00%	<0.001	S

S=significance

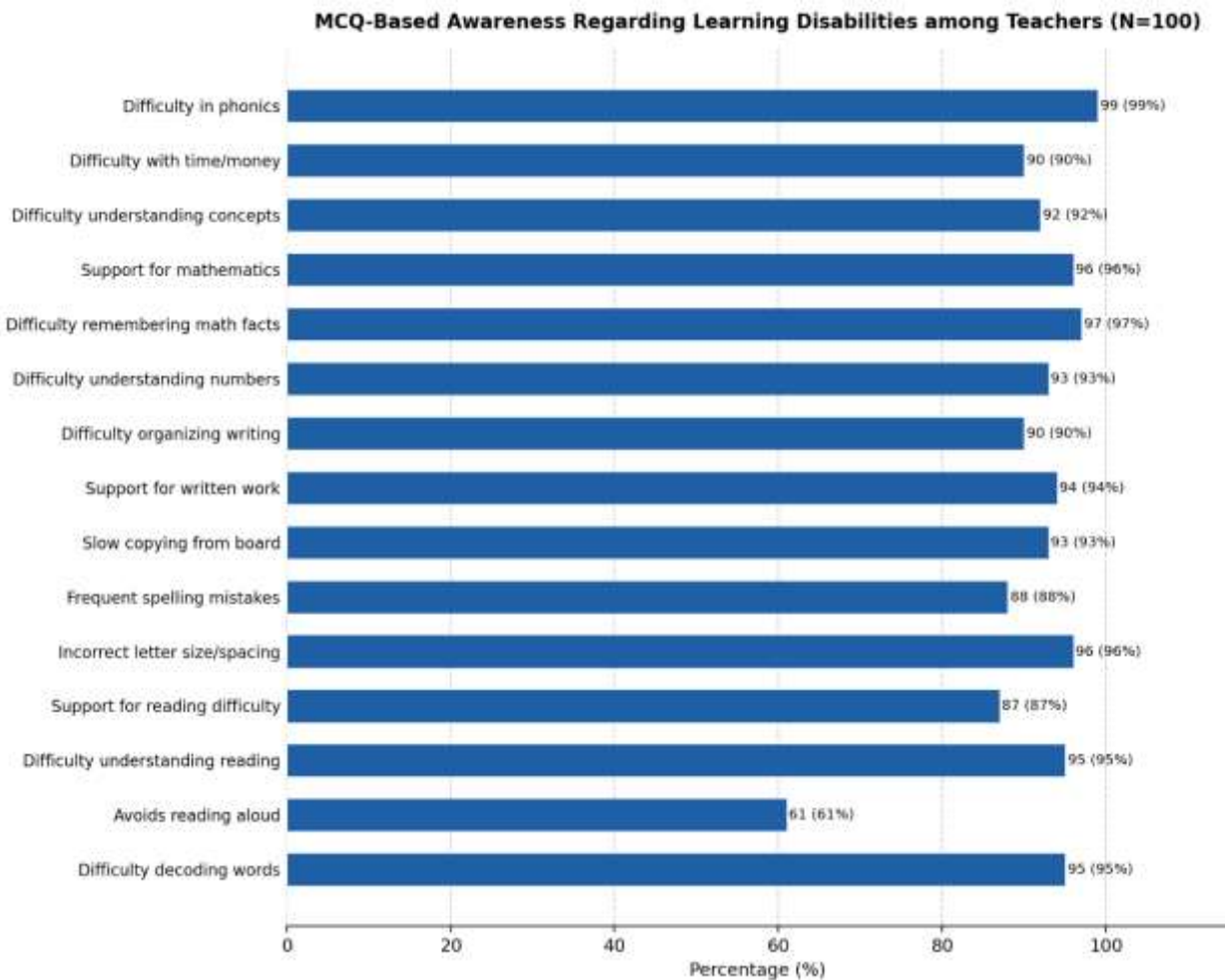


Figure 2 showing awareness (MCQ) regarding specific learning disorders among lower primary school teachers

Table 2 and Figure 2 show the MCQ-based awareness scores regarding specific learning disorders among 100 teachers and revealed overall high levels of correct responses across all 15 items. The highest accuracy was observed for phonics-related difficulty (99%), followed by difficulty in remembering math facts (97%) and incorrect letter size/spacing (96%). Support for mathematics (96%), difficulty decoding words (95%), and difficulty understanding reading (95%) also showed high correct response rates. The lowest correct response rate was recorded for the item on avoidance of reading aloud (61%), which was notably lower than all other items. All 15 items yielded statistically significant results indicating that teacher awareness was significantly above chance level across all domains of specific learning disorders assessed.

Table 3 showing scores of awareness on specific learning disorders among lower primary school teachers in Yes/No and Multiple-Choice Questions

(n = 100)	Aware		Not Aware		P Value	Significance
	N	%	n	%		
Section B – Yes/No Questions						

Are you aware of the term "Specific Learning Disorder"?	98	98.00	2	2.00	<0.001	S
Are you aware that SLD includes difficulties in reading, writing, and mathematics?	98	98.00	2	2.00	<0.001	S
Do you believe that early identification and support can help children with SLD improve academically?	100	100.00	0	0.00	<0.001	S
Do you think classroom teachers play an important role in identifying children with SLD?	100	100.00	0	0.00	<0.001	S
Do children with SLD require additional or specialized teaching support?	99	99.00	1	1.00	<0.001	S
Do you think SLD can affect a child's academic performance even if the child is intelligent?	84	84.00	16	16.00	<0.001	S
Do you believe SLD is caused only by lack of effort or laziness?*	86	86.00	14	14.00	<0.001	S
Do you think SLD can be identified during early primary school years (Classes I–III)?	88	88.00	12	12.00	<0.001	S
Do you believe SLD can disappear on its own as the child grows older without any support?*	92	92.00	8	8.00	<0.001	S
Do you think children with SLD should be sent to special schools only?*	77	77.00	23	23.00	<0.001	S
Do you believe SLD can sometimes be related to genetic or brain-based factors?	92	92.00	8	8.00	<0.001	S
Do you think children with SLD may feel low confidence in class?	85	85.00	15	15.00	<0.001	S
If you identify a child with possible learning difficulties, would you refer the child to a specialist?	89	89.00	11	11.00	<0.001	S
Children with reading difficulties may mix up similar-looking letters like b and d or p and q.	95	95.00	5	5.00	<0.001	S
Some children may have specific difficulty in understanding numbers and performing arithmetic calculations.	100	100.00	0	0.00	<0.001	S
Section C – Multiple Choice Questions						
A child reads slowly and struggles to decode new words. This difficulty is mainly related to:	95	95.00	5	5.00	<0.001	S
A child avoids reading aloud in class repeatedly. This may indicate:	61	61.00	39	39.00	<0.001	S

Difficulty in understanding what was just read is mainly related to:	95	95.00	5	5.00	<0.001	S
Which classroom support can help a child with reading difficulty?	87	87.00	13	13.00	<0.001	S
A child writes letters in incorrect sizes and spacing. This is mainly related to:	96	96.00	4	4.00	<0.001	S
Frequent spelling mistakes despite repeated practice may indicate difficulty in:	88	88.00	12	12.00	<0.001	S
Extremely slow copying from the board is mainly associated with:	93	93.00	7	7.00	<0.001	S
Which strategy can support a child struggling with written work?	94	94.00	6	6.00	<0.001	S
Difficulty in organizing thoughts while writing mainly affects:	90	90.00	10	10.00	<0.001	S
A child struggles to understand number value (e.g., difference between 21 and 12). This mainly affects:	93	93.00	7	7.00	<0.001	S
Difficulty in remembering basic addition or multiplication facts indicates a problem in:	97	97.00	3	3.00	<0.001	S
Which classroom support may help a child struggling in mathematics?	96	96.00	4	4.00	<0.001	S
Persistent difficulty in understanding basic mathematical concepts despite regular teaching may indicate:	92	92.00	8	8.00	<0.001	S
Difficulty in understanding time, money, and measurement is commonly related to:	90	90.00	10	10.00	<0.001	S
If a child does not know the sounds of letters (phonics), this indicates difficulty in:	99	99.00	1	1.00	<0.001	S

S= significance

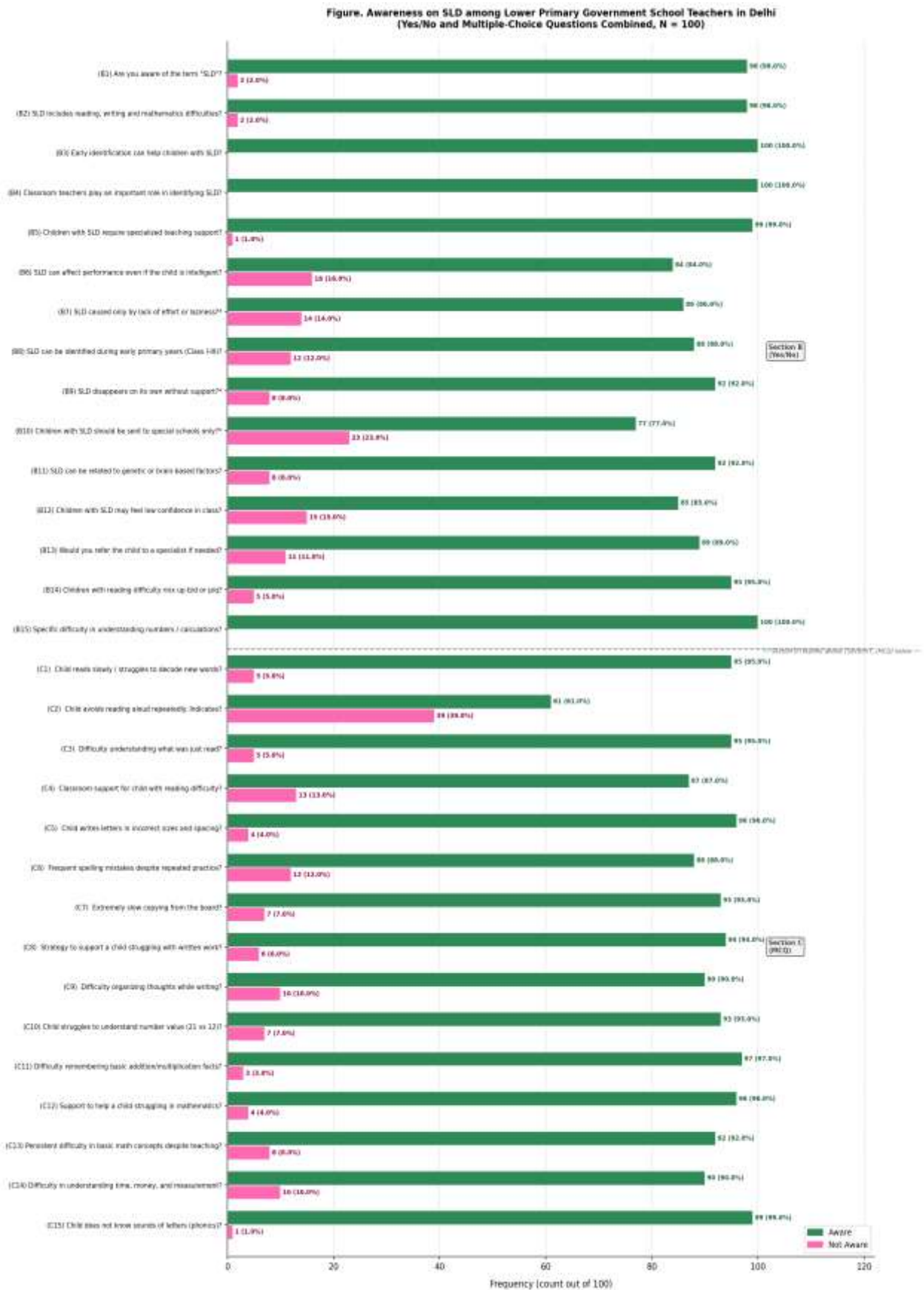


Figure 3 showing awareness on SLD among Lower Primary School Teachers (Yes/No and MCQ Section)

Table 3 and Figure 3 shows item-wise aware and not-aware frequencies across all 30 items. Among the Yes/No items (Section B), the highest awareness was recorded for Items B3, B4, and B15 (100% each), confirming universal recognition of the teacher's role in early SLD identification and the existence of specific numerical learning difficulties. The lowest Section B performance was on Item B10 (77%) asking whether children with SLD should be sent to special schools only where 23 participants (23%) held an incorrect inclusive education belief. Items B6 (84%) and B12 (85%) revealed that meaningful minorities did not recognize SLD's co-existence with average intelligence or its impact on self-confidence. Among the MCQ items (Section C), Item C2 produced the lowest correct-response rate at 61%, with 39 participants failing to recognize oral reading avoidance as a behavioral indicator of reading difficulty. All other MCQ items exceeded 87%, indicating strong recognition of specific SLD subtypes at the symptomatic level. The gap between overt symptom recognition (C1: 95%) and behavioral avoidance interpretation (C2: 61%) is clinically significant, as avoidance of oral reading is among the most consistent early classroom indicators of dyslexia.

Table 4 showing Overall Percentage of Awareness Scores: Yes/No and Multiple-Choice Questions among Lower Primary School Teachers

Overall Awareness	Frequency	%
Awareness (Yes/No)	92	92
Awareness (MCQs)	91	91
Yes/No & MCQs	92	92

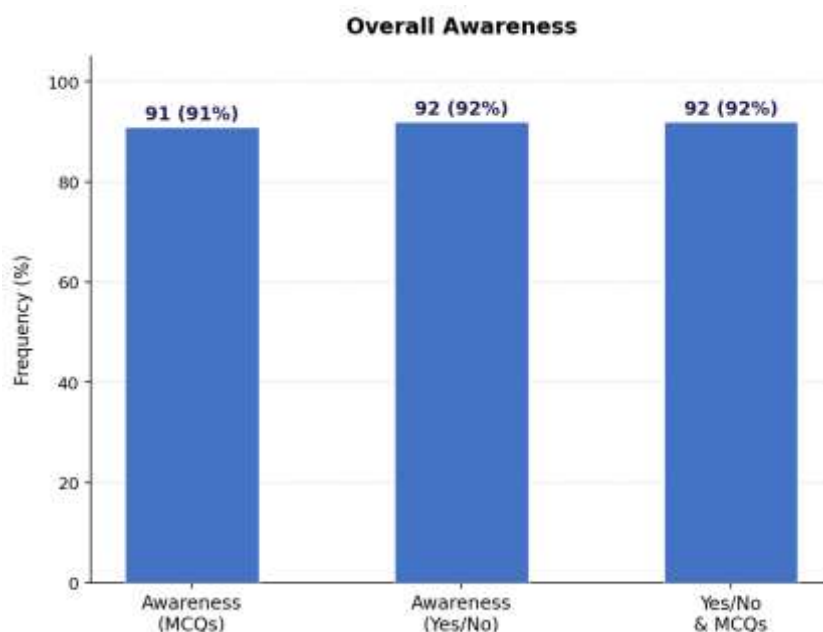


Figure 4 showing overall percentage score of awareness: Yes/No and Multiple-Choice Questions among lower primary school teachers, Delhi

Table 4 and Figure 4 present the overall awareness levels across both instrument sections. A score of 92% was recorded for the Yes/No section, indicating that 92 out of 100 participants demonstrated awareness on general SLD knowledge items. The MCQ section yielded a slightly lower awareness rate of 91%, reflecting the greater precision required for functional identification knowledge. The combined Yes/No and MCQ awareness rate was 92%, confirming a high overall level of SLD awareness among lower primary government school teachers in Delhi. These figures reflect strong overall engagement with SLD-related knowledge, consistent with the item-level analysis reported in Table 6.

Table 5 showing Overall Awareness of SLD among Lower Primary School Teachers

Overall Awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Aware	92	92
Not Aware	8	8

Awareness of SLD among Lower Primary Government School Teachers in Delhi

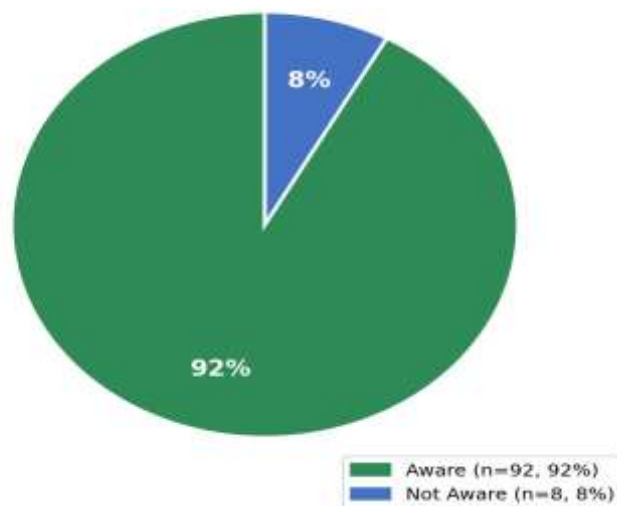


Figure 5 showing Overall Awareness of SLD among Lower Primary School Teachers (n= 100)

Table 5 and Figure 5 summarize the overall awareness classification of participants. 92 out of 100 participants (92%) were classified as aware of SLD, while 8 participants (8%) fell below the awareness threshold. The majority of lower primary government school teachers in Delhi possess meaningful foundational knowledge of SLD. The 8% classified as not aware, however, represents a clinically important subgroup for whom targeted professional development is most urgently required.

Table 6 showing Comparison of Awareness Scores Between Formally Trained and Untrained Teachers

Awareness Measure	Untrained Mean $\pm$ SD	Trained Mean $\pm$ SD	t Value	p Value
Percentage Aware (Yes/No)	92.67 $\pm$ 9.30	90.95 $\pm$ 10.29	0.807	0.422

Percentage Aware (MCQ)	91.94 ± 8.58	88.80 ± 13.82	1.366	0.175
Percentage Aware (Combined)	92.32 ± 7.86	89.88 ± 9.04	1.337	0.184

Table 6 presents the training-based comparison. No statistically significant difference was found in awareness scores between formally trained and untrained teachers on the combined awareness measure. Similarly, no significant differences emerged for the Yes/No section or the MCQ section. Counterintuitively, untrained teachers scored marginally higher across all three measures, though the differences did not reach statistical significance.

Table 7 showing the comparison of awareness scores across teaching experience

Experience Group	Awareness (Yes/No) Mean ± SD	Awareness (MCQ) Mean ± SD	Awareness (Combined) Mean ± SD
0–2 Years (n = 5)	86.68 ± 9.43	94.66 ± 5.56	90.66 ± 6.41
3–5 Years (n = 18)	95.55 ± 6.04	93.32 ± 6.85	94.45 ± 4.57
6–10 Years (n = 22)	91.81 ± 9.41	91.51 ± 8.52	91.67 ± 7.11
11–15 Years (n = 28)	92.13 ± 9.61	88.80 ± 13.70	90.48 ± 10.13
16–20 Years (n = 8)	89.16 ± 18.49	87.48 ± 13.99	88.33 ± 14.79
>20 Years (n = 19)	92.26 ± 7.11	92.27 ± 8.39	92.29 ± 5.55
ANOVA (F Value)	0.939	0.805	0.818
p Value	0.460	0.549	0.540

Table 7 shows the results across six experience groups. No statistically significant difference in awareness scores was observed for the Yes/No section, MCQ section or combined scores. Descriptively, teachers with 3–5 years of experience showed the highest combined awareness while those with 16–20 years showed the lowest.

Discussion

The findings of the present study indicate a high overall awareness level (~91.6%) among Delhi government school teachers, reflecting meaningful engagement with SLD concepts, likely shaped by NEP 2020 policy discourse and inclusive education mandates (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2020). However, specific gaps remain. The notably low performance on recognizing oral reading avoidance (Item C2, 61%) supports Shari and Vranda's (2015) observation that Indian primary teachers tend to recognize SLD conceptually but struggle to identify its behavioral indicators in practice. This gap

between conceptual knowledge and functional identification helps explain why ground-level SLD detection across India remains critically low despite reasonable baseline awareness (Scaria et al., 2023). The persistence of misconceptions around school placement with nearly one in four teachers still endorsing exclusive special school placement for children with SLD reflects the deficit-model thinking that Karande and Kulkarni (2005) identified as deeply embedded in Indian educational contexts. Such misattribution carries serious consequences, as delayed referrals increase dropout risks and contribute to long-term emotional and social difficulties for affected children (Karande & Kulkarni, 2005; Scaria et al., 2023).

The absence of a significant effect of formal training on awareness levels is the study's most notable finding. This aligns with Washburn et al. (2011), who showed that completing training courses does not necessarily translate into stronger identification knowledge, and with Spear-Swerling and Cheesman (2012), who found that even formally prepared teachers showed considerable gaps in applied SLD knowledge. Together, these findings suggest that currently available training may build general familiarity with SLD but fall short of developing the functional, identification-focused skills teachers actually needed in the classroom. This concern is compounded by the lack of standardized screening tools, which forces teachers to rely on intuition alone during the most critical early learning years (Manasi, 2023; Scaria et al., 2023).

Similarly, years of teaching experience did not meaningfully differentiate awareness levels, consistent with Moats (1994) and Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie (2005), who established that classroom experience alone, without structured professional input, does not build reliable SLD identification competence. The wider variation in awareness scores among the most experienced teachers further supports Padeliaadu and Antoniou's (2013) observation that senior educators develop uneven knowledge profiles depending on the quality of their individual professional development histories. Taken together, these findings suggest that teacher training and experience, may not be associated with higher levels of knowledge related to the identification of SLD. While teachers demonstrated a general awareness of SLD, this did not necessarily translate into stronger identification-related knowledge. These findings are consistent with the view that ongoing, practice-oriented professional development may be beneficial for strengthening teachers' ability to recognize and respond to learning difficulties (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

Despite Geary's (2004) prediction of poor dyscalculia recognition, teachers in this study showed strong awareness across all mathematics-related items, possibly reflecting NEP 2020's emphasis on foundational numeracy. Converting this conceptual strength into classroom-level identification remains the key challenge.

Ultimately, bridging the gap between awareness and action requires structured, skill-based professional development programs (Vellutino et al., 2004; Fletcher et al., 2019). In the Indian context, this means developing screening tools suited to multilingual classroom realities (Ahmed, 2015) and building interdisciplinary collaboration between teachers and clinical professionals such as SLPs to enable early, accurate identification of learning disabilities (ASHA, 2016; Kamala & Ramganes, 2013; Lyon et al., 2003).

Summary and Conclusion

The findings suggest a potential role for SLPs in supporting the early identification of children with SLD in school settings. Although teachers demonstrated generally satisfactory awareness of SLD, some gaps were observed in the recognition of specific classroom indicators. These findings highlight the value of

practical, classroom-focused training that may strengthen teachers' identification and referral skills. Collaborative approaches involving teachers and SLPs could support school-based screening and referral processes, particularly in government schools where access to specialist services may be limited. In addition, the absence of significant differences based on formal training suggests a need to review how SLD identification is addressed within teacher education programs. Overall, the study underscores the potential benefits of targeted training and interdisciplinary collaboration in supporting earlier identification and intervention for children with SLD.

Limitations of the Study

1. Less sample size
2. The present study was majorly conducted in southwest and eastern districts of Delhi.
3. Study was conducted in Government Schools only

Future Implications

1. The study can be done in other districts of Delhi
2. The study can be done in private schools
3. A comparative study can be done between private and government schools.
4. The present study can also be conducted in other Hindi speaking states where the primary medium of instruction for both teachers and students is Hindi.

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