

Learning Difficulties in Social Studies among Higher Secondary School Students in Coimbatore District

Dr. A. Joakim

Assistant Professor, Government College of Education for Women, Coimbatore, Tami Nadu

Abstract

The present investigation is an attempt to study the Learning Difficulties in Social Studies from various Higher Secondary School Students in Coimbatore District. Normative survey method was used in the present investigation. Data was collected from a sample of 400 Higher Secondary School Students from Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu state using random sampling technique. Learning Difficulties Scale (2026) constructed and standardized by the investigators was used to collect data. The result revealed that gender, locality and medium of instructions had influence in the learning difficulties in social studies of higher secondary school students. Type of school had no impact in study learning difficulties in social studies of higher secondary school students.

Keywords: Learning Difficulties, Social Studies, Academic Engagement, Higher Secondary Students and Learning Outcomes

Introduction

Social Studies occupies an important place in the school curriculum because it helps learners understand the development of human society and the relationship between individuals, institutions, communities, and the environment. Social Studies encompasses various areas such as history, geography, political science, economics, sociology, culture, and citizenship education. Learning these areas requires students not only to remember information but also to understand concepts, interpret evidence, compare events, analyse social situations, evaluate information, and apply knowledge to real-life situations. Consequently, effective learning in Social Studies requires both lower-order and higher-order cognitive processes. Despite its importance, students may encounter several difficulties in learning Social Studies. The extensive syllabus, large amount of factual information, unfamiliar terminology, chronological sequences, abstract concepts, maps, graphs, statistical information, and complex social and political issues can create learning challenges. Some students may depend heavily on rote memorisation instead of developing conceptual understanding. Others may experience difficulties in reading, concentration, critical thinking, interpretation, and answer writing.

Learning difficulties can have implications beyond academic achievement. When students repeatedly experience difficulty in understanding a subject, they may lose confidence and interest. They may become reluctant to participate in classroom discussions, avoid academic tasks, postpone assignments, or depend entirely on memorisation. Thus, learning difficulties may influence students' level of academic engagement.

Learning Difficulties in Social Studies

Learning difficulties refer to the problems or barriers experienced by students in acquiring, understanding, retaining, and applying knowledge and skills. In Social Studies, these difficulties may appear in different forms.

Conceptual Difficulties

Students may find abstract concepts in economics, political science, geography, and social science difficult to understand. Lack of prior knowledge can further increase conceptual difficulties.

Memory and Retention Difficulties

Social Studies contains numerous dates, events, names, geographical features, constitutional provisions, economic concepts, and historical developments. Students may find it difficult to retain and recall such information.

Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Students need adequate reading skills to understand textbooks and supplementary materials. Difficulties in vocabulary, comprehension, and identifying key ideas may negatively influence Social Studies learning.

Map and Graph Interpretation

Geographical maps, diagrams, tables, charts, and graphs are important learning resources. Some students may find it difficult to interpret and analyse visual and statistical information.

Critical Thinking Difficulties

Modern Social Studies education requires students to analyse causes and consequences, compare perspectives, evaluate evidence, and form reasoned conclusions. Lack of critical-thinking skills may create learning difficulties.

Application Difficulties

Students may understand a concept theoretically but struggle to apply it to current social issues or real-life situations.

Review of Related Literature

Sathiya Priya and Premalatha (2023) made a study on “learning difficulties in social studies among high school students” The sample consisted of 200 high school students in the schools of Coimbatore District selected by random sampling techniques. The tool was constructed by the investigator to study the learning difficulties of students at high school level. The major findings of study is that gender, locality and medium of instructions had influence in the learning difficulties in Social studies of high school students. Type of family and types of school had no impact in study learning difficulties in social studies of high school students.

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) conceptualised student engagement as a multidimensional construct involving behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Their framework has become influential in educational research and provides a useful basis for examining students' involvement in learning.

Appleton, Christenson, and Furlong (2008) examined different conceptualisations of student engagement and emphasised the importance of academic, behavioural, cognitive, and psychological dimensions. They highlighted engagement as an important factor associated with students' educational experiences and outcomes.

Skinner and Pitzer (2012) discussed engagement and disaffection in educational settings. They explained that engaged students show active participation, effort, concentration, and persistence, whereas disengaged students may demonstrate passivity and withdrawal.

Wang and Eccles (2012) examined student engagement during adolescence and highlighted the influence of social and educational contexts. Their work indicates that classroom and school environments can play an important role in shaping students' engagement.

Statement of the problem

The purpose of the problem was to examine the Learning Difficulties in Social Studies among Higher Secondary School Students. So article is titled "Learning Difficulties in Social Studies among Higher Secondary School Students in Coimbatore District"

Objectives of the Study

To assess the level of learning difficulties in Social Studies among higher secondary school students in Coimbatore District.

To find out whether there is a significant difference in learning difficulties in Social Studies with respect to gender, locality, medium of instruction and type of school.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses may be formulated:

1. There is no significant level of learning difficulties of social Studies among higher secondary school students
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learning difficulties in Social studies of higher secondary school male and female students.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learning difficulties in Social studies of higher secondary school rural and urban students.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learning difficulties in Social studies of higher secondary school Tamil and English medium students.
5. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learning difficulties in Social studies of high school government, government aided and private school students.

Methodology

Research Method

The study may employ the Descriptive Survey Method.

Population

The population may consist of students studying in Classes XI and XII in higher secondary schools.

Sample

The present study was conducted on a sample of 400 higher secondary school students from various Schools in Coimbatore district

Sampling Technique

Stratified Random Sampling may be used to ensure adequate representation of students based on selected characteristics.

Tools

Learning Difficulties in Social Studies Scale Prepared by investigator

Personal Data Sheet

Statistical Techniques

The following statistical techniques may be employed:

Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test and ANOVA

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Level of learning difficulties in social studies among higher secondary school students

Variable	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Learning difficulties	70	17.5	225	56	105	26.5

The majority higher secondary school students are moderate level of learning difficulties in social studies (low 17.5 % , moderate 56 % and high 26.5%)

Table 2

Comparison of mean scores of learning difficulties in social studies based on gender, locality, medium of instruction and Type of school

Demographic variable		Count N	S.D	t value/f value	Remarks
Gender	Male	174	6.85	2.14	Significant
	Female	226	6.21		
Locality	Rural	187	5.57	3.32	Significant
	Urban	213	6.58		
Medium of instruction	Tamil	198	6.70	2.38	Significant
	English	202	5.88		
Type of school	Girls	141	3.91	0.75	Not Significant
	Boys	180	6.21		
	Co-edn	79	6.72		

There is a significant difference noted in the learning difficulties in social studies among higher secondary school students based on their gender, locality and medium of instruction There is a no significant difference noted in the learning difficulties in social studies among higher secondary school students based on their Type of School.

Conclusion

Social Studies is essential for developing informed, responsible, and socially conscious citizens. However, higher secondary students may encounter a range of difficulties in learning the subject. These difficulties can involve conceptual understanding, memory, reading comprehension, interpretation of maps and graphs, critical thinking, concentration, and application of knowledge.

The study revealed that gender, locality and medium of instructions had influence in the learning difficulties in social studies of high school students. Type of school had no impact in study learning difficulties in social studies of high school students.

References

1. Appleton, J. J., Christenson, S. L., & Furlong, M. J. (2008). Student engagement with school: Critical conceptual and methodological issues of the construct. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 369–386.
2. Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59–109.
3. Skinner, E. A., & Pitzer, J. R. (2012). Developmental dynamics of student engagement, coping, and everyday resilience. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 21–44). Springer.
4. Wang, M. T., & Eccles, J. S. (2012). Social support matters: Longitudinal effects of social support on three dimensions of school engagement from middle to high school. *Child Development*, 83(3), 877–895.
5. Sathiya Priya. T & Premalatha. T (2023) “learning difficulties in social studies among high school students” *Thiagarajar College of Preceptors Edu Spectra* Vol. 5 No. 2 August 2023 E-ISSN: 2581-8910
6. Gupta, Anil Kumar. (2011). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: Vayu Education of India.
7. Kothari, C.R. (1985). *Research Methodology, Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: Willay Easter Ltd. Sharma, R.A. (2007). *Fundamentals of Educational Research*. Meerut: International Publishing House.