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E: ISSN NO.: 2349-980X **Shrinkhla Ek Shodhparak Vaicharik Patrika**

Identifying the Learning Disabilities in Secondary Schools

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to identify learning disability among home science students in secondary schools. A sample of 500 girl students studying in secondary schools of Agra city was purposively selected. The researcher used the two self -constructed tool and one standardized test for this study. Mean, S.D. and t-test were calculated to analyse the data. In order to identify the students with learning disability in the present study, at primary stage self- constructed tool diagnostic test was administered on students of secondary school and self -made checklist for learning disabled children was given to teachers for identifying the students with learning disabilities in the classrooms. In the secondary stage Raven Progressive Matrices test A, B, C, D and E was administered on selected students for knowing the IQ level of these students. The present study concludes that the learning disabled students are an integral part of a normal classroom. They had normal IQ as other non -learning disabled have.

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Introduction

Learning disability is an area that is a stumbling block for a nation's development process. The learning disabled movement in India is of a recent origin and today is comparable with that of its western counterpart. Mathew (2003) reveals that reports of lower incidence of learning disability in the eastern world were attributed by western scholars to the general lack of awareness and sensitivity among educationists to the specific difficulties faced by students learning to read in overcrowded classrooms. In India, the research on learning disability is in its infancy. Even approximates of the incidence of learning disabilities are lacking, indicating the magnitude of negligence to which these students are exposed. In the absence of a proper measure to be taken in diagnosing and remedy, most students with learning disabilities go unnoticed in the guise of low achievers, underachievers, truant or disinterested and they are denied special educational facilities. There were many questions raised in conducting research in the field of learning disability. How can one identify these students in the normal classroom? How theirs problem can be solved in normal classroom?

There have been some studies of the different disabilities in specific segment in India. These studies have mainly focused on physical disabilities (visual, speech, hearing, orthopaedic), intellectual retardation and psychiatric disturbance (Anand and Patel, 1983).This is also due to the fact that these difficulties are, as yet recognized by very few states in the country. There is an urgent need to pay attention to cognitive, social and emotional development of students with learning disabilities in common classrooms in India. Services have to be planned in a rational way, keeping in mind the needs of the local population. Feasible and cost-effective packages, curriculum services deliveries have to be explored (Rahman and Harrington 2000). Hallahan and Kauffman, (1976) define a learning disabled child as one who is not achieving his potential. Learning disability tends to take a chronic course. Meir (1991) reported that it is not surprising that most of them develop low expectations and problems in self-esteem by the age of nine. Moreover, their academic and personal problems tend to worsen as time passes. Today it is acknowledged that learning disabilities tend to "run in families" (Owen, Adams, Forrest, Stolz, and Fisher, 1971; Walker and Cole, 1965). Whether this is due to hereditary factors or similar learning environments is a matter to be resolved by further research. Studies of twins (Norrie, 1965) suggest that at least some cases of learning disabilities may be inherited. These studies generally showed that when one twin has a reading disability, the other one is more likely to also have a reading disability if he or she is an identical

(monozygotic- from the same egg) twin rather than a fraternal (Dizygotic- two eggs) twin. Another factor that has been named as a possible environmental cause of learning disabilities is poor teaching (Engelmann, 1977; Lovitt). Engelmann, in fact, has estimated that perhaps as many as 90 percent of learning disabled students are so identified because they have been mistaught. From the review of related literature the researcher found that there was no national census of learning disabled has been undertaken so far mainly in India. The learning disabled students neither are identified using reliable tests nor are they given special support and services. In the absence of reliable data in our country, there is a growing concern over how to identify the learning disabilities in different area and how to meet the needs of the learning disabled students, whose data is unavailable. Therefore the researcher embarked on this research work to identify learning disabilities students of Home Science.

Objective of the Study

The objectives of the present study is following as to identify learning disability among home science students in secondary schools.

Methodology

Sample

The present study deals exclusively with learning disabled populations; the purposive method sampling has been used. The sample consists of 500 Home Science students from X classes of secondary schools of Agra City.

Design of the Study

In the present study, descriptive survey method was used.

Tools & Techniques of Data Collection

Following tools were used in present study:

1. Diagnostic test of Learning Disability (DTLD)
2. Checklist for Learning Disabled Children (CLDC)
3. Raven Progressive Matrices Test A, B, C, D and E (RPMT)

To identify learning disabled students in regular schools, the researcher used exclusion–inclusion criteria. Mahajan (1994) used this method for identification.

Exclusion Criteria (Children with following characteristics were not included in the sample)

1. Children having sensorial handicaps.
2. Children scoring below 25th percentile on Raven's Progressive Matrices A, B, C, D & E.
3. Children scoring 50% or above on the diagnostic test of learning disability.
4. Children scoring below 50% on learning problem checklist.

Inclusion Criteria (Children with following characteristics were included in the sample)

1. Children scoring above 25th percentile on Raven's Progressive Matrices A, B, C, D & E.
2. Students scoring below 50% on diagnostic test of learning disability.
3. Students scoring above 50% on learning problem checklist.

Result and Discussion

The data collected is tabulated and the results obtained are presented under the following headings:

1. In order to identify the students with learning disability in the present study, at primary stage self -constructed tool diagnostic test was administered on 500 students of secondary school and self -made learning problem checklist was given to teachers for identifying the students with learning disabilities in the classrooms. In the secondary stage Raven Progressive Matrices test A, B, C, D and E was administered on selected students for knowing the IQ level of these students.

Table 1
Exhibiting the Criteria of Learning Disability on the Basis of Exclusion & Inclusion criteria

S. No.	Tool	Criteria for identifying students with LD and NLD			No. of LD students found
		Below 50%	Above 50%	Total	N=23
At Primary Stage					
1.	Diagnostic Test	23	477	500	
2.	Checklist for LD Children	477	23	500	
At Secondary Stage					
3.	Raven Progressive Matrices Test A, B, C, D, and E	Selected above these 23 students for RPM (Scoring above 25th percentile on RPM Test)			

The above table classifies the students having below 50% score found as learning disabled on the basis of diagnostic test and those students who have score above 50% on learning problem checklist as teachers opinion considering them as learning disabled students and other treated as non-disabled students having above 50% score on diagnostic test and having below 50% on checklist for learning disabled children.

Table 2
Observation related to Mean, S.D. and t of Different Areas of Diagnostic Test

S. No.	Diagnostic Test	Group				
		Normal Students (N = 23)		LD Students (N = 23)		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
1.	Written Expression	7.50	0.79	4.13	0.62	3.47*
2.	Reading Comprehension	7.70	0.48	3.95	0.70	1.38
3.	Mathematics Calculations	7.60	0.94	4.30	0.54	9.96*
4.	Reasoning Analysis	7.21	0.99	4.21	0.59	3.32*
5.	Analysis Ability	7.08	0.84	4.17	0.65	4.70*

t= (2.82) p<0.01, (2.07) p<0.05

The above table exhibits that a comparison has been made between learning and non learning disabled students in order to identify the discriminating power of the tool developed for learning disabled students by the researcher.The mean scores of normal students and LD students and represented shows that a similar pattern exits between each area. However, when 't' test is applied and interpreted significant difference is observed, i.e. both the groups have distinct features on written, mathematics, reasoning and analysis ability test but it is not confirmed in relation to reading ability test.

Conclusion

The researcher identified the learning disabled students on the basis of exclusion and inclusion criteria. The students who have scored below 50% on diagnostic test and scored above 50% on checklist for learning disabled children for taking teachers' opinion and who have scored above 25th percentile on Raven Progressive Matrices test A, B, C, D and E were categorized as learning disabled students for the present study and concludes that the learning disabled students are an integral part of a normal classroom. They had normal IQ as other non-learning disabled have. There is an urgent need to pay attention to cognitive, social and emotional development of students with learning disabilities in common classrooms in India.

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