

Learning Disability among School Children: Analysing the Problem from a Psycho-Social Perspective

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Abstract :“The ramification and still over effect of learning disability affect so much that education of school children find hard reality to attain its universal character. At the same time the problem continues to be the most baffling one for the state thriving for universalization of elementary education and ensuring right to education for all. Many interventions and policy measures although were initiated to increase the achievement level of students but at the Psycho- social level addressing the problem still remained attempted. Providing appropriate literacy and innumeracy learning opportunities especially, continues to be a challenge both for the teachers so also parents. Observing the gravity of the problem an earnest attempt has been made in this paper to understand the conflicting currents of the problem from a psycho-social perspective. A diagnosis also has been made to address the challenges of learning disability among school children, so that the objective of universalization of education could be well attained with.

Keywords: Learning disability, intellectual disability, behavioral disorder, perceptual disorder, cognitive development, psycho-social therapy.

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I. INTRODUCTION

One of the key objectives of universalization of Elementary & secondary education was to promote inclusive education focusing on problem of learning disability of children accrued due to variety of reasons. As per numerous studies, learning disability found to be a major stumbling block in the way of quality education and universalization of Elementary Education. Again Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of education for all and learning disability do not go hand in hand. To attain the objective of millennium development Goal, the problem of learning disability, which is also a by prudent of teaching learning process, has to be thoroughly diagnosed. So teaching learning as two way traffic cannot be separated from each other. In teaching learning process, the teacher as one of the determinants of the student's success is expected to be able to give good contribution in order that the students will not have any learning difficulties. In contemporary times, a large proportion of children suffer from learning disabilities of learning difficulties and therefore do not master or partially master these required academic skill. Not sparingly, each one learns differently. Most of the children have their own 'learning difficulty' to cope with. Some children do not able to read, some have difficulty in writing, find it very difficult to understand the teacher, many need to mull it over in privacy. The basic focus of school education must therefore be on addressing learning difficulties, rather than exclusively upon enrolment. An active psycho-social approach however is valuable in addressing learning difficulties and assuring learning acquisition and allowing learners to reach their fullest potential. At this back drop, it is essential to examine the under laying factors responsible for assurance of learning disability among school children and the required panacea to kill such ills for enrichment of quality education.

Statement On The Research Problem

Learning disability appears to be a problem and clearly visible when a child begins to have trouble in teaching learning process at school. This learning problem is found to be a universal problem throughout the world. But identification of the problem is differently perceived by different countries. In some countries, it is used as a synonym for learning disabilities. However learning difficulties and learning disabilities are usually distinguished with learning difficulties being a broader term. Not all difficulties are learning disabilities. Children develop at different rates and sometimes what seems to be a learning disability may resolve as the child matures. Importantly children who are language learners are sometimes misidentified as having learning

disability, as these children are from poor family background, they initially find hard reality to complete with their fellow students, who hail from sound education background.

Conceptually, 'learning difficulty' is a term generally used for children who have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of their age group students. They are unable to make use of the education facilities, it is found group students. They are unable to make use of the education facilities, it is found that children with learning difficulties have problems with many every day learning activities. Usually children to have problems with many every day numerical activities. Usually children to have problem in spelling, reading and learning ability. There are some children who encounter learning difficulty in all the above these areas, some do have problem with any one or two. Reading and spelling are closely associated skills and it is sure to find reading-disabled children, who are not at all handicapped in spelling. In most of cases it is found that children have learning difficulty in all the these areas: i.e. reading. Research has established that what so ever may be the reason, majority children have disability in some or other subject of learning.

Situating Learning Disability: A Conceptual Understanding.

The problem of learning disability with children can be detected when a student miserably failed to achieve the desired result par with fellow learners from a personal classroom environment. Thus, to be more clear learning difficulties are often the result of an intellectual disability, physical and sensory disabilities, emotional difficulties, lack of educational opportunities, an illness or disruption to schooling, and/or inadequate environmental experiences, which can be overcome with early intervention measure.

On the otherside of the problem backwardness of learners normally caused by maturational lag, which in the initial stage is identified as learning difficulty. The problem may be wholly or partly due to factors in the child such as a sensory motor, handicaps, temporal traits, Psychological problems which are associated to learning difficulties. Environmental factors such as poor educational system, Psycho-Social stress in the context of the family or the school and the inherent nature of the scripts in different languages also contribute to learning difficulties.

Diagnosing the Determinants of Learning Disability.

There is little agreement among experts on the factors responsible for learning disability as there are many factors to explain this baffling problem. There is no single or primary reasons explain learning difficulties among children, rather there are multitude of factors responsible for learning difficulties. This may be discussed as under.

Occurrence of a Disability with different categories of children:

Learning disability normally is an inherent problem with some category of children. However research findings indicates that the children with learning disability may have academic learning difficulty due to basic reading comprehension, written expression, mathematical calculation, mathematical reasoning, language disorders deficits in oral expression, and listening comprehension, perceptual disorders (inability to recognize, discriminate, interpret, visual auditory memory and integer-sensory integration). Besides other type of learning disability such as mate cognitive deficits (predicting, planning, checking and monitoring), socio-emotional problems, negative feeling of self worth, poor self esteem, poor self concept, lack of interaction with peers, adults, behavioral problems distractibility, impulsivity, disruptive behavior, withdrawal, dependency, and perseveration, memory problem are also greatly influence the students achievement level. Learning Disability accruing from Genetic influence, various research have enquired the fundamental research questions, whether learning research have enquired the fundamental research questions, whether learning difficulty genetic or hereditary? There is some evidence to suggest that learning difficulty tend to run in families. Some studies have found that 20% of a group of hyperactive children had at least one parent who was hyperactive. Only 5% of non-hyperactive children have a hyperactive parent. So genetic basis of learning difficulty cannot be altogether ruled out. (OPEPA, 2011)

Researchers have found that dyslexia has a hereditary basis (Cardon et.al., 1994; Fisher et.al, 1999) and behavior genetic analyses have shown that phonological and orthographic skills share heritable variance with word recognition processes (Olson, Datta, Gayan and De Fries, 1999) however the complex interactions between genes and environments are such that the relationship between the dyslexia at the genetic level and dyslexia at the behavioral is far from understood. In their seminal work Feller et al (1987) have revealed that child from homes in which adults were employed in low income unskilled occupations were found to have lower levels of school performance and achievement compared to those from home in which adults were employed in higher paying semiskilled or skilled / professional occupations.

Learning Disability emanating from parental negligence

Researchers investigating the social dimension of the problem argue that complete lack of parental surveillance of homework, too much parental importance on grades secured by students, over and under guidance by parents were found to be related to an extrinsic motivational orientation and lower academic performance. (Bins burg and Bronstein, 1993)

Learning Disability due to lack of enabling school environment.

Many reach on the field have established that besides genetic background and pupil factors, school environment basically characteristics of teacher greatly influence the learning outcomes. Favorable school environment basically good teaching skill by trained teachers with special attention towards low achievers can be an effective solution to address learning difficulties of students at school. (OPEPA, 2011)

II. PSYCHO-SOCIAL ROOTS OF LEARNING DISABILITY

Several research studies enquiring the psycho-social dynamics of the problem have unfolded the myth surrounding the most pertinent and baffling issue, effecting the quality of education and student learning ability at elementary level. Comprehending the problem from socio-economic perspective, it has been widely observed by experts that preponderance and material facilities are power of agents effecting learning ability of students. This directly perpetuates poor concentration along with reading and writing difficulties, (Janaki, 1986). The main cause for scholastic backwardness was found to be faulty parental attitude, poor at 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. (Jogi et al, 1992) Scholars who totally disagreed genetic factors as major determinant of learning disability strongly argue that social dynamics such as large family size, low financial status and low educational status of parents, low parental involvement and encouragement as major contributing factors associated with scholastic backwardness of students. (Ahmeduzzaman, 1992 and Sarada Devi and Kiran, 2002)

Several studies have also revealed that socio-economic status of parents was regarded as significant predictor of lower and higher learning performance (Ginsburg and Bronstein, 1993) Psychological disturbances found to be a major substantial reason for scholastically backwardness of students. (Rozario, 1988)

IV. SPILL OVER EFFECT OF LEARNING DISABILITY ON QUALITY EDUCATION

Various research studies have found that learning disability created out of psycho-social and economic reasons greatly impacted scholastic achievement so also behavior of the students. These children with behavior and emotional problems are likely to be at high risk of the development of specific learning difficulties, converting to learning disability. Learning difficulty at school level in long run throws challenges for academic achievement of students in future. Thus learning difficulty due to low socio-economic status with parental negligence is a powerful correlate of academic achievement. The problem of learning disability emanating from family environment is a vicious circle with growing family discontent and impoverished family condition. Learning difficulty of students greatly affect students performance and parental expectations. This in turn throws challenges like special needs, over protection, parent child enmeshment and rigidity, which create the vicious circle of learning disability.

V. CONCLUSION

The above analysis of the problem of learning disability encountered by school children convinces us that the problem is more preeminent because of psycho-social and economic reasons than more genetic or clinical reason. A thorough understanding of the problem with its psycho-social and economic dynamics of the problem is quite pertinent to deal with learning difficulties among learners. However, it has become extremely important to identify specific reasons for which the learners in different school situations and also in different family environment are facing learning difficulty, A proper grasping of the conflicting currents of psycho-social and economic dynamics of the problem could be a great help for the authority of also family to initiate measures to deal with burgeoning problem of learning difficulty at elementary level. A proper situating of the problem is necessary to plan out remedial measures. A right approach of tracking of slow learners in specific subject is of extreme importance and would be advantage for the teachers to choose appropriate teaching method. To sum up, a proper understanding of the psycho-social dynamics of learning difficulties among school children can enable us to do away with in grappling with the problem and ensure a quality education realizing the goals of universalization of elementary education. Basic / UEE, therefore, should be a battle cry against the prevailing pattern of elitism and selectivity in education that offers much to a few at the expense of a common care of learning for all. Certainly, there cannot be two standards of education; one for the high achiever and one for low achiever. To sum up, to address the problem of learning disability, the need of the hour is a multi stakeholder consultative initiative with civil society engagement which can act like a right kind of panacea to kill the ill.

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