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## PSYCHO-SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*Recent years have witnessed tremendous development in secondary education in terms of enrolment of children. However a major challenge for state continues to be addressing the burgeoning problem of learning difficulties of students at school. Many interventions to increase the achievement level of students at Psycho-social level also has been initiated, but Providing appropriate literacy and innumeracy learning opportunities especially, continues to be a challenge both for the teachers so also parents and schools. At this backdrop, the present paper finds it pertinent to provide an conceptual understanding of learning difficulty of students at school level, explaining its psycho-social dynamics and to this effect has also made an endeavour to address the challenges of learning difficulty for promotion of an inclusive education.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Learning difficulty, intellectual disability, behavioural disorder, teaching-learning process, perceptual disorder, cognitive development, psycho-social therapy.*

### INTRODUCTION:

The concern for universalization of elementary education stems from the concern for promoting inclusive education focusing on the problem of learning difficulties of students. In fact addressing the problem of learning difficulties, simultaneously take care of quality improvement of school education. There is no contradiction between the demand for universalization of elementary education and learning difficulty. Learning and teaching are two things which 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 or learning difficulties and therefore do not master or partially master these required academic skill. Not surprisingly, 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 shawl education, must therefore be on addressing learning difficulties, rather than exclusively upon enrolment. A active psycho-social approach

however is valuable in addressing learning difficulties and assuring learning acquisition and allowing learners to reach their fullest potential. It is therefore, necessary to comprehend and understand learning difficulty and orient our approach towards learning acquisition and achievement.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

Learning difficulties and learning problems are often the first descriptive terms used when a child begins to have trouble in 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 improvised backgrounds or with severe problems at home that their preparation for school or their behaviour.

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 that children with learning difficulties have problems with many every day learning activities. Usually children to have problem in spelling, reading and numerical 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 there areas; i.e. reading, spelling and numerical disorder. However in occasional it is reported that children encountering problems in one or two areas of learning skill.

### **LEARNING DIFFICULTIES / DISABILITY: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS:**

Learning difficulty is a problem identified with children who significantly failed to achieve the desired result par with their 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.

Most often learning difficulty is identified as backwardness of learners caused by maturational lag. The problem may be wholly or partly due to factors in the child such as sensory motor, Handicaps, Temporal traits, Psychological problems which are associated to learning difficulties. Environmental factors such as poor educational system, Psycho-Social stresses in the context of the family or the school and the inherent nature of the scripts in different languages also contribute to learning difficulties.

### **FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES:**

There is little agreement among experts on the factors responsible for learning difficulties, 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.

### **Learning difficulty as basic characteristics of different categories of children:**

It is commonly perceived that learning difficulty is inherent problem of some category of children. However research findings indicate that the children with learning difficulty 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 inter-sensory integration), Meta 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 behaviour, withdrawal, dependency and perseveration, memory problem.

### **Genetic factors creating problem of learning difficulty:**

Is 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)

However, recent research has confirmed us that dyslexia has a hereditary basis (Cardon et. al., 1994; Fisher et. al, 1999) and behaviour 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 behavioural is far from understood.

Feller et al (1987) 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.

### **Parental negligence as factor responsible for learning difficulties of children:**

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)

### **School Environment and learning difficulty:**

Apart from the genetic background and pupil factors, school environment basically characteristics of teacher greatly influence the learning outcomes. Favourable 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)

### **PSYCHO-SOCIAL DIMENSION OF LEARNING DIFFICULTIES:**

Explaining the Psycho-social dynamics of the problem several research studies have unfolded the myth surrounding the most pertinent and baffling issue, effecting the quality of education and student learning ability at elementary level.

Looking 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)

Experts also observed 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)

However, research 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 scholastical backwardness of students. (Rozario, 1988)

### **CONSEQUENCE OF LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN CHILDREN:**

It has been established by research findings that learning difficulties created out of psycho-social and economic reasons greatly impacted scholastic achievement so also behaviour of the students. This children with behavioural 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 throw 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.

Learning difficulty impacting 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 throw challenges like special needs, over protection, parent child enmeshment and rigidity, which creates the vicious circle of learning disability.

### **CONCLUSION:**

To conclude quality in elementary education has been greatly hampered due to growing problem of learning difficulty among students. 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 so 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. What is required on the aspect of learning difficulty is an uncompromising and unruffled commitment with an indomitable will to address the situation.

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