



Learning Disabilities in Children and Its Effect on Their Psyche.

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Abstract:- Learning disabilities, for e.g. dyslexia, have shown to affect an individual's ability to understand or use language, to carry on mathematical calculations, movement coordination and sustain attention. They are usually diagnosed in children once they start school.¹

According to Dr. Marshall Raskind, children affected with learning disabilities (LD) not only experience problems in reading, writing, memory, mathematics, ect., but also experience problems in the psychological aspects like frustration as a strong feelings, anger, shame and/or sadness, that may lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, ,also problems related to behavior like juvenile delinquency, substance/drug abuse. These problems are "Unfortunately," more devastating than the actual academic problems/challenges faced by these children. The impact of some of these psychological challenges /issues is so much that it may be experienced even further on in life even in adulthood.²

Key words: Learning Disabilities, Children, Psyche

Introduction:- In Learning Disability a child faces learning difficulties, however there is no associated disability in the physical aspects. Learning disorders: where an individual has a scholastic difficulty which results in a general impairment with respect to learning – for e.g. dyslexia – and has no impairment of skills used for adaptation. According to **ICD-10.** 'Specific developmental disorders of scholastic skills' and 'learning disorders' by DSM-IV-TR ..the symptoms of these disorders are first observed in childhood however it occurs in children who have intelligence i.e. average , but may also occur in children who have associated cognitive function which is on the lower side. Normal patterns of skill acquisition are noticed to be disturbed in children with this range of deficits, usually at the age where such functions become required (e.g. difficulties in learning to read). These disorders do not arise as a consequence of brain injury or disease but as a dysfunction in cognitive processing.³

According to DSM-5, it considers Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) as a type of Neurodevelopmental Disorder: that affects ,the ability to learn/ use specific academic skills (e.g., reading, writing, or arithmetic), these are the fundamentals for the other academic learning. The early signs of learning difficulties may start appear

in the preschool years (e.g., difficulty learning letters/counting), however it can only be diagnosed after starting formal education.³

Children with learning disabilities (LD) often have problems that go far beyond those experienced in academic aspects, but have a devastating effect on their psyche.²

Definition: -

Learning disabilities are disorders that affect's an individual's ability to understand or use written or spoken language, perform mathematical calculations, movement coordination or direct attention.¹

Learning Disabilities refers to limited functioning in three areas...

- Social skills (e.g. communicating with others)
- Conceptual skills (e.g. reading and writing ability)
- Practical ability (e.g. clothing/bathing one's self)

--DSM-V (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 2013).⁴

Types of Learning Disabilities:-

According to:

- ICD-10 (International Classification of Disorders)
- DSM-V (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)

ACCORDING TO THE ICD-10 CLASSIFICATION OF MENTAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS⁵

F81 Specific developmental disorders of scholastic skills

F 81.0 Specific reading disorder (Dyslexia)

- *Learning to read*
- *Milestones reached later*
- *Speech*
- *Slow at learning sets of data*
- *Coordination*



- *Left and right* -mixed up.
- *Reversal of* numbers and letters
- *Spelling* the children learn how to spell a word today and completely forget it the next day.
- *Phonology problems* – In this case, if a word has more than two syllables, phonology becomes difficult.
- *Concentration span* - children with dyslexia find it hard to concentrate.
- *Sequencing ideas* - seem illogical.
- *Autoimmune conditions* – more prone to conditions, like ., asthma, eczema & allergies.

F 81.1 Specific spelling disorder (Dysgraphia)

- This condition involves problems with handwriting.
- It includes writing, awkward pencil grip, inappropriately sized or spaced letters or spelling problems.
- Students with this problem sometimes use a laptop computer at school as an accommodation

F 81.2 Specific disorder of arithmetical skills (Dyscalculia)

- This involves difficulty with calculating numbers
- Difficulty with grasping mathematical concepts.
- There is no specific single type, as it varies from child to child.

According to DSM-V

- Neurodevelopmental disorder
- That impedes the ability to learn or use specific academic skills (e.g., reading, writing, or arithmetic).
- The other aspects of development seem to be fine in these children.
- The early signs of learning difficulties may appear in the preschool years, however they can only be diagnosed after starting formal schooling.⁵

Causes of Learning Disabilities: -

- **Heredity** : - learning disabilities runs in families, so a child with learning disability may have a parent or other relative affected with learning disability.
- **Problems during pregnancy and birth:-** teratogenic factors(drugs /alcohol during pregnancy), illness/injury during or before birth, low birth weight (LBW), lack of oxygen to baby, premature or prolonged labour.
- **Environmental factors:-** malnutrition , inadequate/poor prenatal care in antenatal period
- **Incidents after birth:-** head injuries during process of delivery, nutritional deprivation.

Symptoms (Most Frequently Displayed):..⁷

- Attention span- short,
- Memory - poor,
- Difficulty following -directions,
- Inability to discriminate between/among - letters, numbers, sounds,
- Reading and/or writing ability- poor,
- Eye-hand coordination - poor,
- Sequencing- difficult
- Organization and other sensory abilities- difficult.

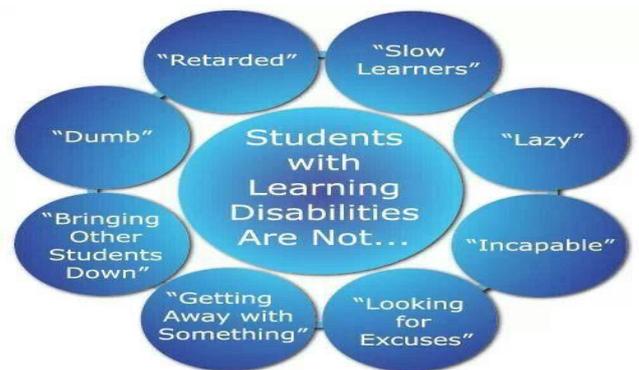


Fig.1. What students with learning disabilities are NOT.....

Differential Diagnosis:-

- Intelligence-mental retardation, borderline intelligence, dull normal
- ADHD –Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder



- Other Neurodevelopment disorder & childhood disorder-autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Aspergers syndrome, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), conduct disorder.
- Environmental causes- change in school/place/country, poor/negative peer relation.

Diagnosis: -

- Assessment of reading abilities, short term memory, sequencing skills, coding skills and an IQ test.
- IQ Assessment-Verbal/Performance
 - Standardized IQ test tools
 - Wechsler’s test
 - Indian Adaptation (Halins Test)
 - Bhatia Battery of Intelligence
 - Binet Hahath test
 - Standford Binet
 - Learning Disability-Wide Range Achievement Test
 - Word reading
 - Sentence Comprehension
 - Spelling
 - Math competition
 - Schnoel Gradual Reading Spelling Test
 - Wood Coch Johnson Test
- Psycho Education Assessment
- Curriculum Assessment

Treatment Modalities:-

- Best treatment is **MOTIVATION**-instructions should be given to teachers and parents to motivate the child rather than pointing mistakes, which will make the situation worst.
- Main treatment:
 - **Remedial Teaching :-**
 - Raise the child’s self-esteem
 - Find out what all other areas they are good
 - Such children are usually good in drawing, coloring, singing , cycling, sports ..etc.. encourage them

➤ **Remedial Coaching:-**

- catering to only the basic skills of language & math’s
- individual education programs
- settingup of different curriculum for students, which differ age wise.

- **Treatment of associated disorders** e.g. ADHD(Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)..
- **Concession (to avoid negative feedback in children):-**
 - Extra time for writing exams
 - Reader during exam
 - Writer during exam
 - Calculator during exam
 - Exclusion of any one language
- **Other :-**
 - Make these children to READ more, as words depicts in their memory.

Writing impositions are only for short term memory

Psychological and other related difficulties of kids with Learning Disabilities..⁷

Learning disabilities affect child’s performance in school; however .. they can develop emotional/behavioral issues which affect their day to day performance.

The behavioral issues are as mentioned below:

- sleep problems,
- anxiety or
- signs of acting out...by children

Warning signs of psychological difficulties:-..⁸

- Low self-esteem .
- The signs of low self-esteem in kids are either “direct” or “indirect.”

Direct indicators include:

- words or actions , indicating that a child lacks self-confidence,
- is overwhelmed by challenges facing him/her, or
- has little hope for future success, sense of hopelessness.

Caution note for parents /teachers:





- you definitely will be worried that your child/student is experiencing psychological difficulties
- what you need to do is, seek help in the form of .. discuss with your child's Paediatrician (child health specialist), family doctor, or a mental health personnel.
- Most important is , early signs psychological issues.
- First of all , begin to support him/her to regain his/ her self-esteem, motivation, mixing with friends friends, family, and day to day activities of study, play & recreation.

- Writing
- Mathematics
- Testing & Accommodations

Other Strategies :-

- Break learning into small steps,
- Administer probes,
- Supply regular quality feedback,
- Use diagrams, graphics and pictures to help what they say in words,
- Engage the students in process type questions ,
- Provide prompt feedback of strategies used,
- Direct instructions...

Negative Feedback: in the mind of the child arises as always teachers/parents complaints of decline in performance, motor activity/play areas are affected...

Approaches/Strategies for coping with these challenges..

It is important to implement strategies that address the needs of the individual child. It is recommended that these strategies are applied across home, school, and community contexts.

Academics & Organization: - strategies to be applied in the following areas..

- Reading

Conclusion:

It is a known fact that learning disabilities are there to live for lifelong. However the way in which they are expressed may vary from individual to individual, over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the demands of the environment and the individual's strengths, weaknesses and needs. To overcome the difficulties of Learning disabilities & for leading a successful life, individuals with learning disabilities require early identification and specialized assessments and interventions involving home, school, community & workplace settings. This requires support from family, teachers, friends , community and society at large.

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