

# Assessment of Learning Disability On Students of High Schools in Herat City, Afghanistan

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**Abstract**— *One of the fundamental dimensions of education is learning, since learning change in potential behaviour and individual will have the ability to put knowledge in action and make education's purpose. Absence of information of parents and inexperience of some teachers cause learning disability such as writing, reading, and mathematics on disability in our society. Nowadays these disabilities almost embrace the whole society. A learning disability can't be cured or fixed; it is a lifelong issue. The general purpose of this article is identifying learning disability and also determining the amount of learning disability in Herat high schools. Also this study wants to find out the process of student's learning that whether there are such problems? How much is the amount of these disabilities? What are the causes? The paper is on learning disability which was done in four Herat High schools. (Soltan High school, Gowher Shad High School, Aynda Sazan High School, Hewad High School). Library research and field research has been used for identifying learning disability and determining the amount of them in Herat schools. Human sources, articles, books were means of collecting data in both researches. Herat city has more than 90 private and governmental schools, attending all these schools in the research are impossible, randomly selected 2 private schools and 2 governmental schools. In addition, 120 participants participated in this research and answered the questions. According the statistics this paper concluded that, learning disability exist in Herat schools including male, female, private, governmental schools which caused serious irresistible in our minds. Some suggestion are in conclusion.*

**Keywords**— *education, learning, disability, private Schools, governmental schools.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are many students who cannot speak fluently and write in a proper way, they do mistakes while performing their daily activities. In addition, some of students face problems to solve mathematics sums or while paying attention to different issues. Through the questionnaires, such students with these disabilities recognized and in these papers the profitable solutions were presented.

Existence of disability in children, adults and youths cause numerous problems to acquire new knowledge, as well as, bring cultural poverty in Afghan society. The culture of every society is being made by opinion and beliefs of its people which both are painted from knowledge. Lack of knowledge in the minds of people of our society push that society toward adversity. My responsibility toward my society and requirement of my society had me decide to do a research in this setting. I used various methods to collect data such as library research and field research.

In the broadest sense, learning occurs when experience a relatively permanent change in an individual's knowledge or behaviour. The change may be deliberate or unintentional, for better or for worse, correct or incorrect, and conscious or unconscious. To qualify as learning, this change must be brought about by experience; by the interaction of a person with his or her environment. In the 19th century the behaviourist school of thought had some components in common with the more popular Psychoanalytic and Gestalt theories of psychology. There were far more differences however, especially relating to internal states of mind, consciousness and the concept of private events. Behaviourism can be considered a philosophy of psychology that explains all things that organisms do. (Anita Woolfolk. 2008)

The definitions given by various authors suggest that learning disability refers to a retardation, disorder, or delayed development in any one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, spelling, writing, or arithmetic. These problems are due to disorder or deficiency in any one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in use of spoken or written language. They do not include learning problems which are due primarily to visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, and emotional disturbance or to adverse environmental factors. The child, thus can be considered as learning disabled if, (1) he has considerable difficulty in understanding or using spoken language, reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic, during the developmental period (before 16 years of age), (ii) he has adequate facilities, interest and motivation to learn (Ramaa, 1992). According to government regulations, students with learning disabilities have "disorders in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. "There are many different kinds of learning disabilities. Most often they fall into three broad categories:

Reading disabilities (often referred to as dyslexia).

Written language disabilities (often referred to as dysgraphia).

Math disabilities (often called dyscalculia).

**Methodology of the Study**

The papers in your hand are a research on the subject of learning disability which was done in four Herat High schools. In this research we have use interview and questionnaire for better distinction. We hope to precede this research in an effective and logical way and be in the service of my society. The purpose of this article is identifying learning disability and also determining the amount of learning disability in Herat high schools. For selecting schools, we randomly selected 2 private schools and 2 governmental schools. In addition, 120 participants participated in this research and answered the questions. There are some main and sub questions in the following that answered in conclusion.

**Research Questions****General Questions**

- 1- Is there learning disability in Herat high schools?
- 2- How is the amount of learning disability in Herat high schools?

**Specific Questions**

- 3- How much is the amount of learning disability in Herat schools?
- 4- How much is the amount of learning disability in female and male schools?
- 5- The amount of learning disability in governmental and private schools?
- 6- Is the amount of learning disability more in governmental than private schools?
- 7- Is the amount of learning disability more in male schools than female schools?

**Limitation of the Study**

- 8- I faced some limitations during the research such as lack of sufficient sources in English language, unfamiliarity of teachers with learning disability and other psychology issues, in coordination of private schools properly, great number of students, fear of students from their teachers to respond to questionnaire, limitation of time, etc.

**Learning Disorders**

Communication and Learning Disorders Language disorder. A child's delay in using spoken and written language is characterized by small vocabulary, grammatically incorrect sentences, and/or trouble understanding words or sentences. Social (pragmatic) communication disorder. Despite adequate vocabulary and the ability to create sentences, these patients have trouble with the practical use of language; their con-vibrational interactions tend to be inappropriate. Speech sound disorder. Correct speech develops slowly for the patient's age or dialect. Childhood-onset fluency disorder (stuttering). The normal fluency of speech is frequently disrupted. Selective mutism. A child chooses not to talk, except when alone or with select intimates. DSM-5 lists this as an anxiety disorder. Specific learning disorder. This may involve problems with reading(Jamesh,2014).

Learning disability, learning disorder and learning difficulty are often used interchangeably, they differ in many ways. Disability refers to significant learning problems in an academic area. These problems, however, are not enough to warrant an official diagnosis. Learning disorder, on the other hand, is an official clinical diagnosis, whereby the individual meets certain criteria, as determined by a professional (psychologist, paediatrician, etc.) The difference is in degree, frequency, and intensity of reported symptoms and problems, and thus the two should not be confused. When the term "learning disabilities" is used, it describes a group of disability characterized by inadequate development of specific academic, language, and speech skills. Types of learning disabilities include reading disability (dyslexia), mathematics disability (dyscalculia) and writing disability (dysgraphia). (Childhood. 2008).

**Diagnosis of Learning Disabilities**

It is restricted to those cases in which there are clear impairment in school performance (if the person is not a student) in daily living Activities-Impairment not due to mental retardation or to a pervasive development disorder such as autism. Skill deficits due to attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder are coded under that diagnosis. This coding presents another diagnostic dilemma, because some investigators hold that an attentional deficit is basic to many learning disabilities. Children whith these disabilities are more generally said to be "learning disabled" (LD). Significantly more boys than girls are diagnosed as learning disabled, but estimates of the extent of this gender discrepancy have varied widely from study to study. Children with learning disabilities are initially identified as such because of an apparent disparity between their expected academic achievement level and their actual academic performance in one or more school subjects such as math, spelling, writing or reading. They do not have obvious crippling emotional problems, nor do they seem to be lacking in motivation, cooperativeness, or eagerness to please their teachers and parents –at least not at the outset of their formal education. Nevertheless, they fail, often abysmally and usually with a stubborn, puzzling persistence. (Dale H. Schunk.2012).

Learning disabilities are often identified by psychiatrists, school psychologists, clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists and neuropsychologists through a combination of intelligence testing, academic achievement testing, classroom performance, and social interaction and aptitude. Other areas of assessment may include perception, cognition, memory, attention, and language abilities. The resulting information is used to determine whether a child's academic performance is commensurate with his or her cognitive ability. If a child's cognitive ability is much higher than his or her academic performance, the student is often diagnosed with a learning disability. The DSM-IV and many school systems and government programs diagnose learning disabilities in this way (DSM-IV uses the term "disorder" rather than "disability".) (Dale H. Schunk.2012).

**Causal Factors in Learning Disabilities**

Probably the most widely held view of the causes of specific learning disabilities is that they are the products of subtle central nervous system impairments. In particular, these disabilities are thought to result from some sort of immaturity, deficiency, or

dysregulation limited to those brain functions that supposedly mediate, for normal children, the cognitive skills that LD children cannot efficiently acquire. For example, many researchers believe that language-related LDs such as dyslexia are associated with a failure of the to develop in a normally asymmetrical manner with respect to the left hemisphere, where language function is normally mediated, for unknown reasons appear to remain relatively underdeveloped in many dyslexic individuals. Some investigators believe that the various form of LD may be genetically transmitted. This issue seems not to have been studied with the same intensity or methodological rigor as in other disability. Although it would be somewhat surprising if a single gene were identified as the casual factor in all cases of reading disorder, the hypothesis of a genetic contribution to at least the dyslexic form of LD seems promising. One twin study of mathematics disability has also turned up evidence of some genetic contribution to this form of LD. (Robert C., 2011).

The causes for learning disabilities are not well understood, and sometimes there is no apparent cause for a learning disability. However, some causes of neurological impairments include:

- Heredity – Learning disabilities often run in the family. Children with learning disabilities are likely to have parents or other relatives with similar difficulties.
- Problems during pregnancy and birth – Learning disabilities can result from anomalies in the developing brain, illness or injury, fetal exposure to alcohol or drugs, low birth weight, oxygen deprivation, or by premature or prolonged labor.
- Accidents after birth – Learning disabilities can also be caused by head injuries, malnutrition, or by toxic exposure (such as heavy metals or pesticides) (Barr,2012).

#### Symptoms of Learning Disability

- Parents can ask this question to find the Symptoms

#### Is Your Child Having Difficulty?

- With reading comprehension or math skills?
- With letter sequences? (soiled for solid, left for felt)
- With prefixes, suffixes, root word and other spelling strategies?
- Organizing his/her bedroom, notebook, papers, and desk?
- Keeping up with papers or assignments?
- With handwriting?
- With time management?
- Understanding oral discussions and expressing thoughts aloud?
- Spelling the same word differently in a single document.
- Taking on reading or writing tasks.
- With open-ended questions on tests.
- With memory skills.
- Adapting skills from one setting to another.
- With a slow work pace.
- Grasping abstract concepts.
- Focusing on details.
- misreading information

It is never too early to seek help for your child, but waiting too long could be very harmful. If you see several of these signs over a period of time, consider the possibility of a learning disability. Knowing what a difference early help can make will help you lose your fear and take the next steps to getting help for your child! (Wozniak, R. H., 1999).

#### Reading Disabilities

National Institute of Neurological Disability and Stroke defines reading disability or dyslexia as follows: "Dyslexia is a brain-based type of learning disability that specifically impairs a person's ability to read. These individuals typically read at levels significantly lower than expected despite having normal intelligence. Although the disorder varies from person to person, common characteristics among people with dyslexia are difficulty with spelling, phonological processing (the manipulation of sounds), and/or rapid visual-verbal responding. In adults, dyslexia usually occur after a brain injury or in the context of dementia. It can also be inherited in some families, and recent studies have identified a number of genes that may predispose an individual to developing dyslexia." (McCandliss BD, 2003).

#### Disorder of Written Expression

Disorder of written expression is a type of learning disability in which a person's writing ability falls substantially below normally expected range based on the individual's age, educational background, and measured intelligence. Poor writing skills must interfere significantly with academic progress or daily activities that involves written expression (spelling, grammar, handwriting, punctuation, word usage, etc.). This disorder is also generally concurrent with disability of reading and/or mathematics, as well as disability related to behaviour. Since it is so often associated with other learning disability and mental problems, it is uncertain whether it can appear by itself. The prevalence of disorder of written expression is estimated to be of a

similar frequency to other learning disability, between 3 - 5%. A diagnosis can be made based on results of several assessments. (Helman, A. L. 2015).

#### Symptoms

- Multiple spelling mistakes
- Errors in grammar and punctuation
- Exceptionally poor or illegible writing
- Sentences that lack cohesion
- Reluctance or refusal to complete writing tasks
- Anxiety or frustration (breaking pencils, tearing up homework assignments, )

#### Causes

Specific causes of this disorder are unknown. The interaction of physical, psychological, and environmental factors is thought to contribute to the disorder of written expression. In neuropsychological and neurobiological research, some studies show evidence that abnormally high testosterone levels and abnormalities in cognitive processes (visual-motor, linguistic, attention, and memory) are thought to play a role in learning disorder cases. The impact of brain injuries in both children and adults can impair any of these cognitive processes (Helman, A. L. 2015).

#### Math Disability

Sometimes called dyscalculia, a math disability involves such difficulties as learning math concepts (such as quantity, place value, and time), difficulty memorizing math facts, difficulty organizing numbers, and understanding how problems are organized on the page. Dyscalculics are often referred to as having poor "number sense".

Nonverbal learning disability: Nonverbal learning disabilities often manifest in motor clumsiness, poor visual-spatial skills, problematic social relationships, difficulty with mathematics, and poor organizational skills. These individuals often have specific strengths in the verbal domains, including early speech, large vocabulary, early reading and spelling skills, excellent rote-memory and auditory retention, and eloquent self-expression.

Disability of speaking and listening: Difficulties that often co-occur with learning disabilities include difficulty with memory, social skills and executive functions (such as organizational skills and time management). (Hammil, D.D.1990).

#### Results of Research

##### Statistics and Results Gaining from a field Research

Four schools were observed (two Private and two governmental schools) which from each group one was female school and the other was male school for collecting statistic about learning disability in Herat schools. I just concentrate on secondary students (seventh, eighth, ninth grades), so I prepared a questionnaire including 25 questions divided in four parts.

Firs part, identifying accuracy and concentration disability, second part identifying reading and pronunciation, third part for identifying writing disability and last one for identifying mathematics and calculation disability. I distributed about 120 questionnaires for these schools (30 for each school). 60 of questionnaire were applied for female students 60 for male students, on the other hand, 60 for private school and 60 for governmental school. Since wanted have a comparison between female and male students, between private and non-private schools. Regarding the Mentioned Points, We Can Express the Results of Prevalence of Learning Disability in Four Sampling Schools as following:

Table 1percentage of prevalence of learning disability

schools	Percentages
Soltan High school,	64%
Gowher Shad High School	46%
Aynda Sazan High School	25%
Hewad High School.	46%

Source: Authors' estimates based on data collected from schools (2018).

As in Table 1, it is presented that from four high schools; Soltan High school has 64 % disability in learning since Gowher Shad high school and Hewad High school have 46 % disabilities in learning, since Aynda Sazan high school only has 25 % disability in learning.



**Table 2: amount of learning disability Goharshad High School**

Goharshad High School	
Attention deficiency	31%
dyslexia	16%
dysgraphia	28%
dyscalculia	13%.

Source: Authors' estimates based on data collected from schools (2018)

In Table 2 it shows that in Goharshad High School, the attention deficiency is 31, but their dysgraphia is about 28% since the student's dyslexia is 16% and the lowest percentages is on dyscalculia that 13%. Finally, in Goharshad High School there are some disabilities.

**Table 3: Amount of Learning Disability in Soltan High School.**

Soltan High School	
Attention deficiency	43%
dyslexia	30%
dysgraphia	34%
dyscalculia	43%.

Source: Authors' estimates based on data collected from schools (2018)

In Table it shows that in Soltan High School, the attention deficiency is 43, but their dyscalculia is also 43 since the students' dysgraphia is about 34% and finally, the students' dyslexia is 30%. And it shows the lowest percentages.

**Table 4: Amount of Learning Disability in Hiwad High School**

Hiwad High School	
attention deficiency	29%
dyslexia	18%
dysgraphia	18%
dyscalculia	23%.

Source: Authors' estimates based on data collected from schools (2018)

In Table 4 it shows that in Hiwad High School, the attention deficiency is 29, but their dyscalculia is 23 since the students' dysgraphia is about 18% and finally, the students' dyslexia is also 18%.

Figure 5: Amount of Learning Disability in Ayande Sazan High School

**Table 5: Amount of Learning Disability in Ayande Sazan High School**

Ayande Sazan High School	
attention deficiency	0%
dyslexia	7%
dysgraphia	8%
dyscalculia	21%.

Source: Authors' estimates based on data collected from schools (2018)

In Table 5, it shows that in Ayande Sazan High School, the dyscalculia 21 % but their dysgraphia is 8% since the students' dyslexia is 7%, and fortunately their attention deficiency is 0%.

Fig. 1: Amount of Learning Disability in boys and girls high schools.

Source: Authors' estimates based on data collected from schools (2018).

in figure 1, To compare the girls and boys High School separately their general disabilities with each other. The boys' general

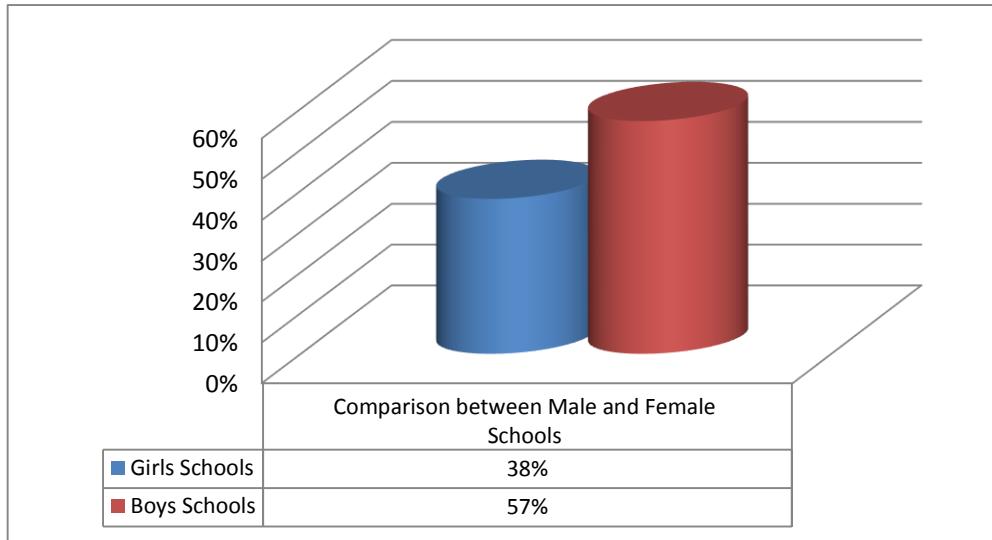


Fig. 1:: Amount of Learning Disability in boys and girls high schools.

disabilities are 57 % since the girls general disabilities are 38%.

Figure 2: Comparison between Schools Considering Each Disorder.

Source: Authors' estimates based on data collected from schools (2018).

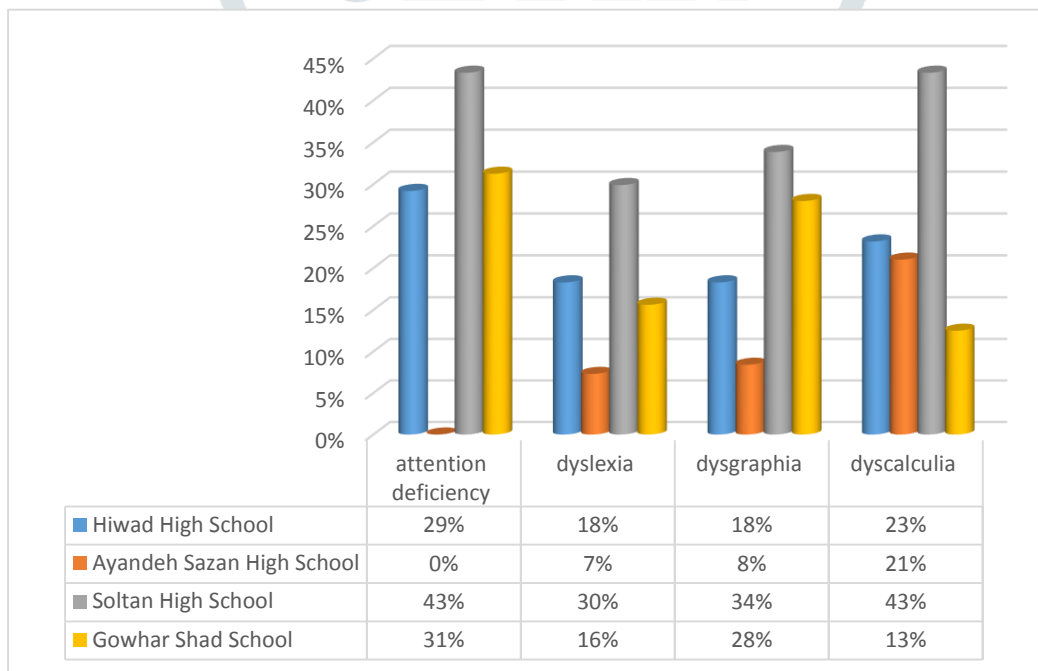
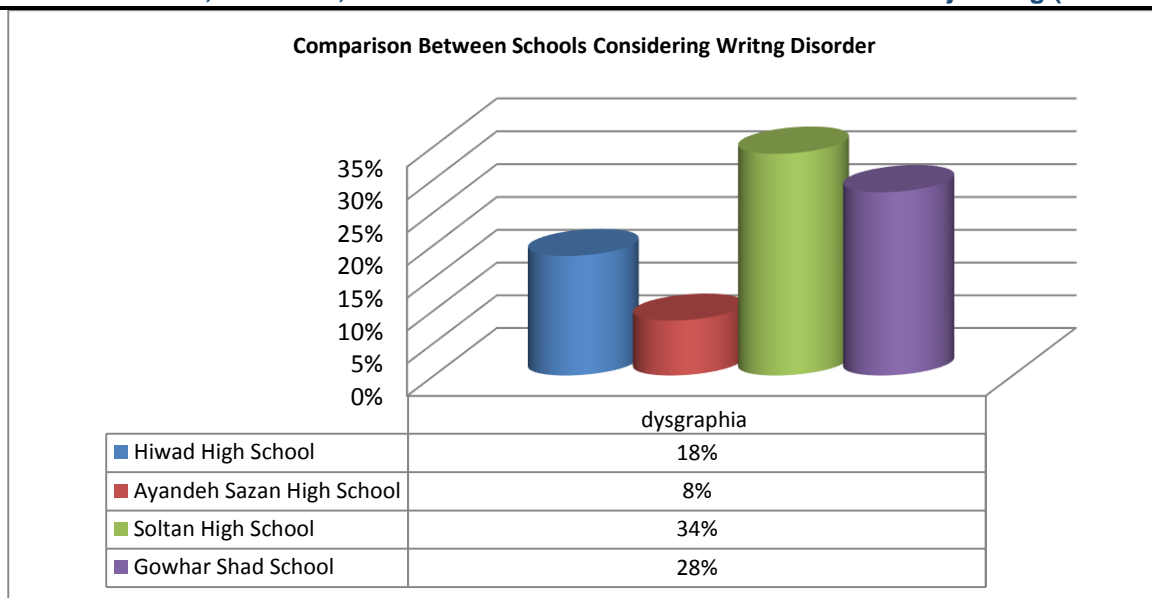


Fig. 2: Comparison between Schools Considering Each Disorder

As you can see in the figure 2, there is a comparison of all high schools from their disabilities in learning. It shows that the more disabilities from four issues Sultan High school have high and less disabilities have Ayandeh Sazan High school.



**Fig. 3: Comparison between Schools Considering Writing Disorder**

As it presented in figure 3, the Writing Disorder among all four schools is different. The problem of writing in Sultan high school is more than three other schools the percentage is 34. And the school that has fewer problems in writing is Ayandeh Sazan high school, it is 8%. Gowhar shad school writing disability is 28% and Hiwad high school disability in writing is 18%.

**Table 6: Comparison between Schools Considering Calculation Disorder**

schools	Percentages
Hewad High School).	23%
Aynda Sazan High School	21%
Soltan High school	43%
Gowher Shad High School	13%

Four schools compared from calculation disordered in the Table 6. The school that has more disability in calculation is Soltan high school, the second school that has disordered in writing is Hiwad high school that is 32% and the third school of disability in calculation is Ayandeh sazan that 21% so, that last school and the less disability in calculation is Gowhar Shad school that is 13% .

### Conclusion and Discussion

As you observed in former pages a collection of data has been collected from books and book's sources about learning and its disability. This process continued to gather statistics of area which marked to learning condition in Herat schools. According to these statistics we reach to one conclusion, learning disability exist in Herat schools including male, female, private, governmental schools which caused serious irresistible in our minds. Such prevalence of learning disability in Herat schools not only caused noxious effects on children, adults, even effected on youths and aged people. On the other hand, economic problems keep parents out of their children's education.

During decades of war people of this society went out of education and culture. Nowadays there are handicaps in each setting; we are not out of problems, for instance culture of studying which is the foundation of education in one society. The latest technological tools exist in this society, but unfortunately culture of using of such tools is incorrect, such as TV and computer. We just spend times for watching absurd programs of TV or playing games in computers.

Besides of all these, allocating a few budget for education ministry by central government caused schools have less facilities or small environment. This subject matter declined motivation of teaching in teachers, as well as, effected on student's learning. Actually each society is being belt on education. Research has shown among students with learning disability, number of students with concentration disorder is more, but what are the causes? The answer is; rudeness of family, incorrect relations of family disturbed their minds and had them suffering from mental dispersion.

Comparison between students of private and governmental schools proved that students in governmental schools have more LD than students in private ones. According to my point of view the ones who are in charge of private schools try their best to enhance teaching quality and make the students and their parents satisfied since these schools are their income source. Teachers in such schools not only motives parents to pay more attention on their children, but also they do some activities to develop level of knowledge of society. Principles of these schools believe in process of teaching, they focus more on students individually and hold motivational programs, encouraging races and parent's association for establishing relationship between schools 'office and parents which has great role on decreasing of learning disability.

Having less amount of learning disability in female schools than male schools indicates process of teaching and learning is being done much better in female schools. Economic problems can be the main reason, but as male teachers believe men are purveyors of the family. For obtaining the life expenses, they must work full time. Even principles of governmental schools complain from male teachers who teach in the afternoon since they do this job in private schools in morning time, too. While presenting themselves in the afternoon there is no motivation and energy. Moreover, female teachers show more emotional relations and students will reaction more to such relations.

Way of conflicting learning disability is to encourage children for learning and studying books, telling stories for them or providing toys to become more enthusiasm of knowledge and develop their mind. While parents do not care enough to their child, show violent movies at home, which can be a cause to make a child's mind disordered.

How can we praise education quality with such condition!? In the hope of having a secure country, developed economic, skilled teachers, allocating sufficient budget for acquisition of students to be released from such problems such as learning disability. Thus it is possible to have a country in peace with healthy and sympathetic people as well creative and reflective students.

## *Recommendation*

### *Parents*

1. Parents are the first teachers whom a child communicates, so they must pay more attention to train their children in earlier phases
2. Studying books collectively can be a good way to increase culture of studying.
3. Purchasing books and equipping a library for children help them associate with books.
4. Parents can hold a great relation with schools' office and teachers to be aware of their children's instruction condition.

### *Teachers*

1. Teachers should identify their students' talents and teach according to it.
2. It is recommended to prefer quality rather quantity in teaching
3. Place their student in pivot of their teaching process.
4. Recommended various sources not just text book.
5. Punishment in teaching process will have harrowing results on students, so punishment should be the last way to end incorrect behaviors of students.

### *Ministry of Education/Afghanistan*

1. Employing methodical and experienced teachers.
2. Economic problems make teachers disinterested; try to enhance teachers' salaries to remove such problems.
3. Preparing teaching helping materials has also great role on decreasing learning disability.

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