



Specific Learning Disability: Is it Temporary or Permanent?

Priti Yadav, Dr. Shrandhanvita Singh, Prof. Dr. Sanjay.k Jha

AMITY SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

AMITY UNIVERSITY HARYANA, INDIA

ABSTRACT

Specific learning disability is an umbrella term that includes – dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia. This invisible disability is prevalent in school-going students like 5 to 15% are affected by this disability. According to statistics, it is seen that 63% people are know someone who has this disability, 43% people have this misconception that this disability is related to IQ and as mentioned before 10- 15% school-going children have learning disability. Moreover, from last decade it is also seen that there is certain kind of awareness among the people regarding this learning disability. Though this awareness is not enough to make this situation right. The parents and teachers play a very significant role in a children overall development and they are prone to witness the changing differences in children behaviour and way of performing of certain task. So along with awareness it is also important to ensure measures to provide opportunity to those who are coping up with disability so that they can also excel in academics and life like their peer group. Further, to achieve this task the parents should be more empathetic towards their child and proactive because the sooner they will recognize this the sooner the necessary intervention will be required can be done. On the contrary, teachers should not use complicated methods while teaching. Also, the school authorities should arrange become proactive to organize resource classrooms and they should also appoint special instructor or educator to analyses the needs of the children with learning disability and also receive remedial education and become competent enough in ensuring that these children get the compulsory provision both during school and board examination. Meanwhile, this can only be only done when Government of India recognize this learning disability as a disability.

Keywords: Dyslexia, learning disability, academics

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Samuel Kirk, notably known for introducing the term learning disability” is an American Psychologist. After working extensively with various students who were repeatedly failing because of their poor performance in examination. The analysis that came out was that those students were not mentally retarded. Later, through thorough observation he stated that these students who were lacking in academics could be help by different ways of teaching. But for the time being they were classified under the term of having “dyscalculia” or “minimal brain dysfunction” as they have tendency or difficulty in comprehending sentences or letters due to that they just reverse their alphabet and made errors in their spellings.

Specific learning disability is a set of neurodevelopmental disorder that causes constant problem in academics or their grasping ability is too slow as compare their fellow. Moreover, they face certain kind of difficulties such as reading which is termed as “dyslexia”, writing which is called “dysgraphia” and the last one in solving mathematical calculation which is termed as “dyscalculia”. Even though they are having normal intelligence, conventional

schooling, proper vision and hearing and so forth. The students or children with specific learning disability (SLD) suffers is specifically academics issues that corporates making mistakes while writing, reading incorrectly or loudly and the handwriting of these students is really unclear and untidy. They face various types of confusion or doubts while comprehending any alphabet as they have tendency to reverse letters. These student performance in solving mathematical problems is also too poor.

However, it does not mean that the students (SLD) are not competent enough or normal. But the reality is that they are just like their fellow intelligent and good at everything just like them they but their state of mind is the result of disruption in neural system not genetically inherited. The point that made these students less competent is that their grasping ability is less as compare to other students. Only due to this factor or reason they fail to score good grades.

Throughout, the years it has gained the attention of parents, teachers and psychologist. They are quite aware of this disability among students or children. So, in this paper I will be talking about this disability, prevention and awareness among people and students.

METHODOLOGY

Since this research paper aim is to examine the awareness about learning disability among the people. So, the data for this research were collected by conducting a Goggle survey form. Hence, the questionnaire was filled by both school- college students and working people including both male and female. And the secondary data was taken from Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled, government sources and internet sources.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION**1. CLASSIFICATION**

In this section, we will discuss about the classification of specific learning disability. The International Classification of Disease explain learning disability as ‘specific developmental disorder of scholastic skills (SDDSS)’, in which the normal patterns of skills acquisition are disturbed from the early stage of development, not as a consequence of lack of opportunity to learn or due to any form of acquired brain trauma or disease. It incorporates the following categories of specific scholastic disorders: (1) Specific reading disorder, (2) Specific spelling disorder, (3) Specific disorder of arithmetical skills, (4) Mixed disorder of scholastic skills, (5) Other developmental disorder of scholastic skills.

In this research paper, we will just discuss about the main three learning disabilities which are related to- reading, writing and mathematics.

- **Specific Reading Disability**

This disorder developed when an individual could not read or have impairment in development of reading skills though it is not because of intellectual functioning, visual, poor schooling and so forth. Further it includes reading skills like reading comprehension, word recognition, oral reading skills and even impairment in skills that require reading. In some cases, they have a history of specific developmental delays in speech and language acquisition. In initial phase various difficulties have been observed such as learning an alphabetic script, in reciting the alphabet, in naming letters, rhyming words, in analysis or categorization of sounds. Later on, reading disorder may be manifested in omission, substitution, distortion or addition of words, slow reading rate, hesitations, reversal of words and even sentences, inability to comprehend, or recall what was read and so forth.

- **Specific Writing Disability**

This disability has a category mainly known as “specific spelling disorder”. Here, children with specific spelling disorder came across the issues related to development of spelling skill mainly this occurs because of intellectual functioning, visual acuity or sometimes due to poor schooling and poor parenting. Further, it has been seen that in certain cases, spelling issues are present in writing problems, though this is not mandatory that if a child has writing disability will be having spelling problem. The main cause or reason for this disability is poor visuo-motor coordination. If a child is suffering from spelling issues or difficulties then that individual can be assessed through a test which is individualized test of spelling. The experts or clinician while assessing the spelling impairment or difficulties should also see whether the child is facing issues while reading comprehension. In certain cases, the environment either at home or school might be the possible cause of spelling difficulties.

- **Specific Mathematical Disability**

The specific mathematical disability is mainly associated with basic computational skills like – addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. This specific impairment does not consist issues in higher mathematical skills which are algebra, trigonometry, geometry or calculus. It does not prevail because of intellectual, sensory, perceptual or neurological impairment or might be due to inadequate teaching – learning atmosphere.

2. PREVENTION

➤ **Reading:** In this modern world, reading has been considered a significant factor and if one fail to achieve it. It may lead to immense difficulties in adaption. The following two methods use for improving reading capability: (1) code emphasis programme and the other one is (2) meaning emphasis programme. The main characteristics of these two methods is – the first one is mainly responsible for letter sound regularity and the second one on comprehension. For example, in CEP method the children are made familiar with the phonemically similar words so that the children understand their structure in terms of phonemes via rhyming like: CAT – MAT – BAT. On the contrary MEP performs the decoding technique to enhance the comprehension by observing the most frequently words in the child’s language atmosphere.

- **Developmental Approach**

Language development is the main focus point in this approach. Eventually, this approach consists of reading activities as per the emergence of vocabulary. And the main objective of this approach is to engage children in motivational activities. The programmes or activities that includes in this approach is very useful for the individual who are multi – culturally disadvantaged groups. It is specifically comprehension oriented.

- **Direct Reading Activity Approach**

This approach mainly encourages students to prepare materials, new concepts. Moreover, they also encourage them to ask questions. It is truly said that through practice one can achieve anything that the case here skills can be developed by workbook exercise. And in this way children learn new words via phonic method.

- **Linguistic Approach**

This approach is a whole word approach. Mainly in this approach children are taught words either in word families or spelling patterns. Though it will only be as whole words. This approach not directly teach the students regarding the relationship between the letters and sounds though they learn them through minimal word difference. Later on, when the student performance progresses, then words that contain irregular spellings are introduced as sight words (the words that appeared frequently in sentences).

- **Language Experience Approach**

This approach mainly uses children's spoken language for generating content for reading. The other thing that this approach focuses on what is the interest areas of a student: what child think – talk, speak – write and last one is write – read. This method is considered a part of a whole integrated activity as it includes – thinking, listening, talking, reading and writing. That is why it generate content according to student interest.

- **Multisensory Method**

In this approach, believes that certain students progressed or do their best when the material is shown or presented in several modalities. This approach also known as VAKT which refers to – (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) method. It is also seen that students understand concept words if presented in forms of presentation or visuals form and so forth.

- **PASS Method**

The scholars such as Das, Naglieri and Kirby in 1994 suggested that the cognitive processes which are involved in intellectual performance like reading can be better understood through PASS that stands for (Planning, Attention, Simultaneous, Successive) model, whereas the Planning discussed as a mental process that provides cognitive control. It consists of plans, self – regulation, self – monitoring, utilization of processes, and knowledge to achieve a desired objective. Attention refers to individual's concentration on cognitive activities like resistance to distraction and selective attention over time. While, Simultaneous refers carefully management of various information at the same time and to organize them into interrelated groups. Successive signifies to ordering of the information in proper specific manner. This model extensively used for teaching cognitive skills to children with learning disabilities.

- **Writing**

The writing skills is one of the important factors for development of an individual. The individual. To develop writing skills, what is needed most is designing effective writing instructions that is modify to the needs of the learner, identifying barriers while analyzing writing them, then designing technology to reduce those errors. Here we will discuss about some notable methods of writing instruction.

Developing Basic Readiness Skills

- **Manuscript Writing:** To develop basic writing readiness skills, therapists, instructor, parents and teachers must divert their concentration on handwriting first. It acquires proper perceptual – motor coordination and control, skill in discriminating the shape, size and position of letters. Hence, they are initially taught how to draw basic geometric shapes like straight(vertical) lines. Horizontal, curves, circles, triangles or rectangles required for the basic structure of the alphabets. Children learn cursive handwriting too.
- **Transitional Writing:** In this method, since children get in second or third standard, they are taught cursive writing, even though it is bit difficult for the children or students. Moreover, lately there has been question regarding their usefulness. This transitional writing method mainly transform letters or words to image, to paint with fingers, drawing alphabet, free movement and so forth. These activities develop both perceptual – motor skills and learner enthusiasm or motivation. In the starting of the second grade, the attention is given to spelling skills through various kinds of activities. Though this spelling skills are bit difficult to learn for certain students as English language or subject don't follow certain rules. So, with the help of various examples are used by teachers, parents, instructors.
- **Mnemonic Method**

Under this method, teachers assign students to write or prepare a long content like stories to assess their improvement in writing. The purpose of this method is to improve the memory of the written content and the way or sequence of an explanatory content. They taught this simple mnemonic to analyses the process of writing. For instance, “WWWH” (mnemonic device) which stands ‘W’ for ‘who’ (character of story), ‘W’ for ‘where’ (how story began), ‘W’ for ‘when’ (when happened) and ‘H’ for ‘how’ (how story ends). To conduct this kind of activities can be taught by demonstration or group discussion and practice.

- **Test -Study – Test – Technique**

Under this method, the students or children receives a reading or writing exercise to assess the basic level learning skill and a list of misread or misspelled words is prepared and then he is exposed to remedial education. Subsequently, a second evaluation is done and the progress is plotted to show the difference. This process continues until the student reaches a certain level of proficiency.

➤ Mathematics

It is truly said that a lot efforts and skills are required for acquisition of mathematical concept such as grouping, mental operation like correspondence or manipulation of objects, memorization etc. it is also seen that children perform very poor in mathematics due to various factor one of them is time management to check own performance. Hence, it becomes important to carefully consider the areas and extent of deficits in the individual. It can only assess through interviews and test of students and teachers. Individual program would be the best option or way to teach arithmetic skills to students with mathematical disability. Some methods are mentioned below:

- **Cognitive - Behavioural Approach**

This approach mainly focuses on improving mathematics problems solving skills by improving intermediate executive processes like – translation, Integration, Planning and Monitoring and last one is Execution. Meanwhile, **Translation** stands for translating or converting relational content into relational statement like (addition, subtraction, multiplication or division). To be precise any text problem or word problem is transformed in required mathematical operation. Moreover, it would be easy for the learner if the relational word or text convert among tables, graphs and equation as this will improve the problems solving skills. Secondly, **Integration** here, refers the learner tends to integrates these mental elements representation of circumstances as a whole. This needs assimilation of required information from the statement of the problem, their coherent organization then came to conclusion from them for problem solving. The third is the **Planning and Monitoring** in this stage the learner select its strategy to solve the problem, like choosing a same example of a problem solving, as similar problems solving situations, restarting problem solving process or make sub goals to solve the clue problems. Lastly, **Execution**, it is the last stage of mathematical problem solving in this model, includes the realization of a solution procedure. It acquires procedural knowledge like addition, subtraction, multiplication and other higher mathematical operation.

3. SURVEY DATA

The data for this research paper is collected by conducting Google form. This report is prepared by collecting 52 responses from different States of India. Where it was filled by three category of people which includes – 15 – 24, 25 – 35 and lastly, above 35. The response of the survey is mentioned below;

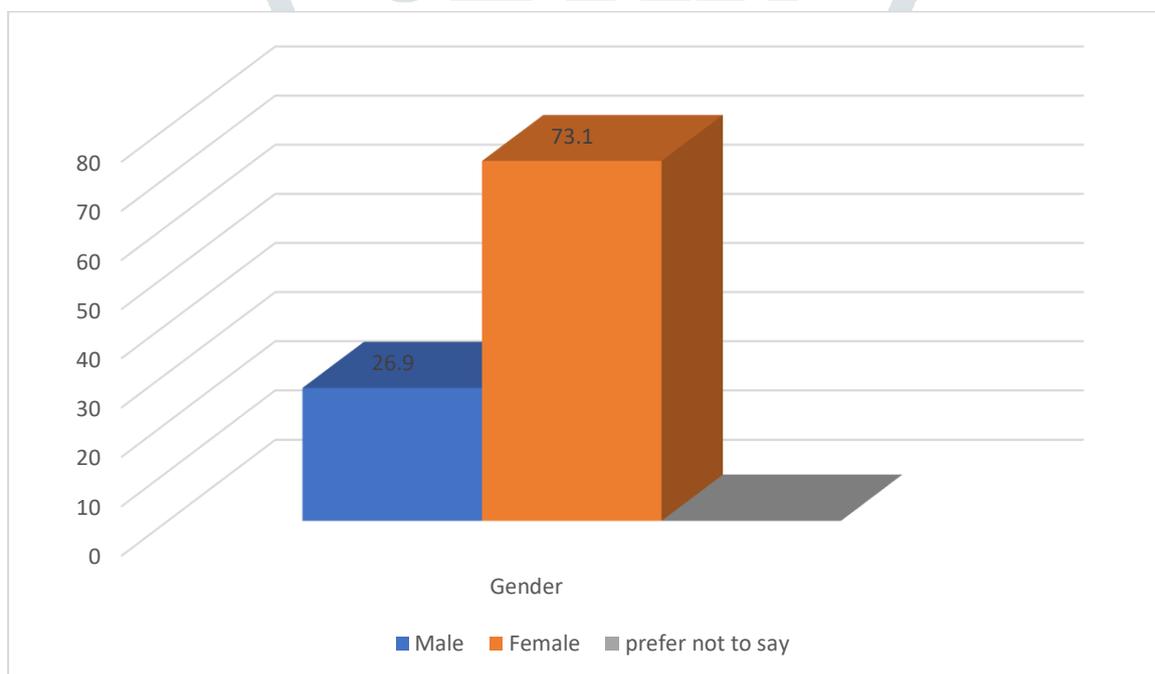


Table 1

Source – Survey

This graph represents the gender of the people gender who participated in the survey. Further, the survey reveal that out of 52 response 73.1% were female and 26.9% were male.

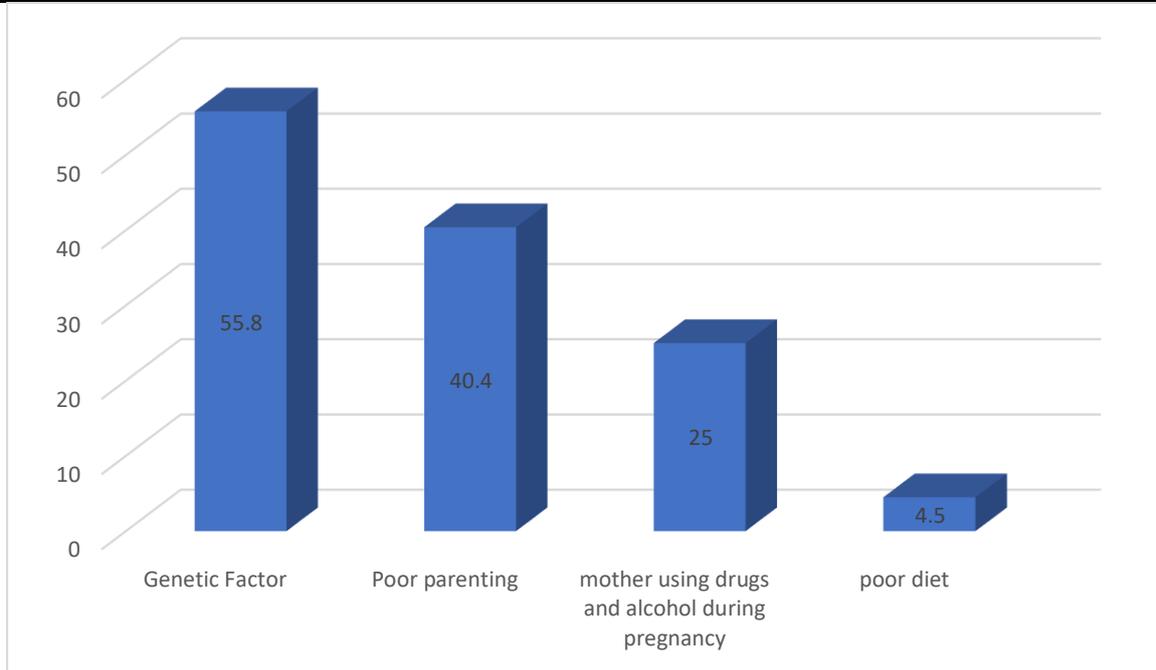


Table 2

Source – Survey

This graph represents the what can be the potential factor or cause for the specific learning disability. The survey that conducted to fulfill the aim of the research paper revealed that the major cause for this disability is genetic factor with 55.8%, secondly, potential factor is poor parenting with 40.4%, thirdly, the potential cause very poor diet with 30.8% and lastly, out of 52 response the least expected factor for this disability is mother using drugs and alcohol during pregnancy with 25%. Though the main factor for learning disability is use of drugs and alcohol during pregnancy. This disability has nothing to do with genetic, poor diet or poor parenting. Because it is something related to brain and any kind of external factor play any role in development of the disability.

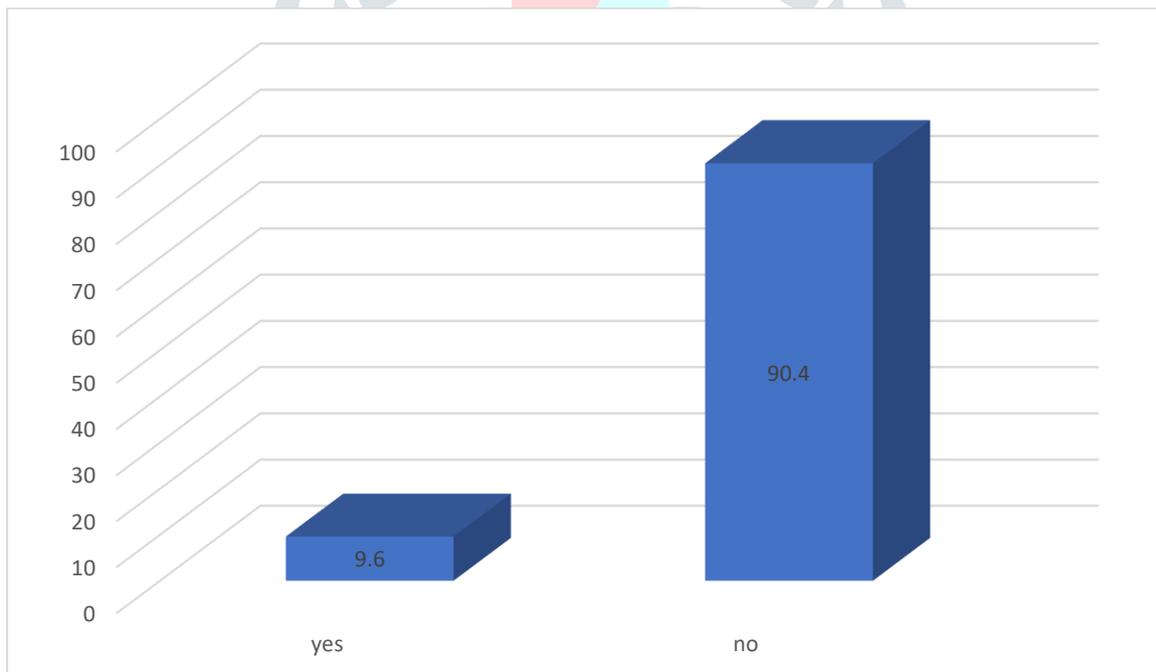


Table 3

Source – Survey

This graph represents the data of one of the questions asked in the survey that are they suffering from learning disability and the response out of 52 revealed that 9.6% people are suffering from this disability and rest 90.4% don't.

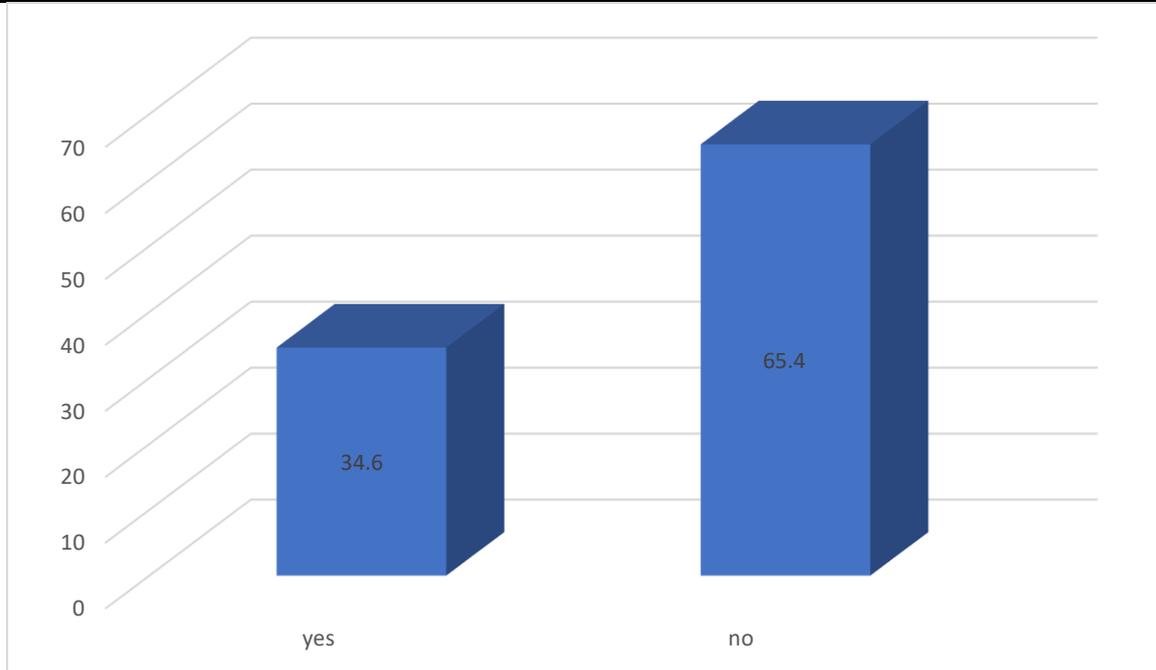


Table 4

Source – Survey

This graph represents the data of questions which was asked in the survey that if people know someone having this disability and from 52 responses it was revealed that 34.6% people know someone who is suffering from this disability while 65.4% don't know. Though official data say that 63% people know who is suffering from this disability.

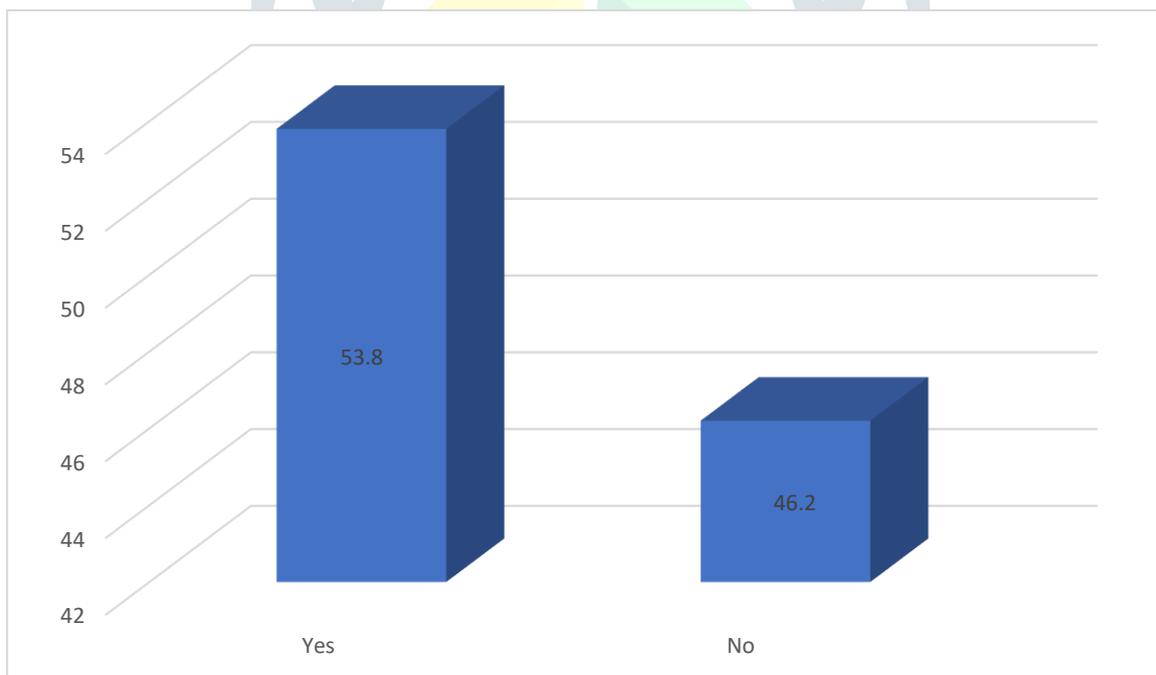


Table 5

Source – Survey

This graph represents the data about whether Autism is learning disability or not. Moreover, 53.8% people think it is while 46.2% don't consider it a learning disability. But the fact is autism spectrum disorder is not learning disability rather it is a developmental disability which is caused by differences in the brain. People who are having this Autism they also face issues while communication and interaction.

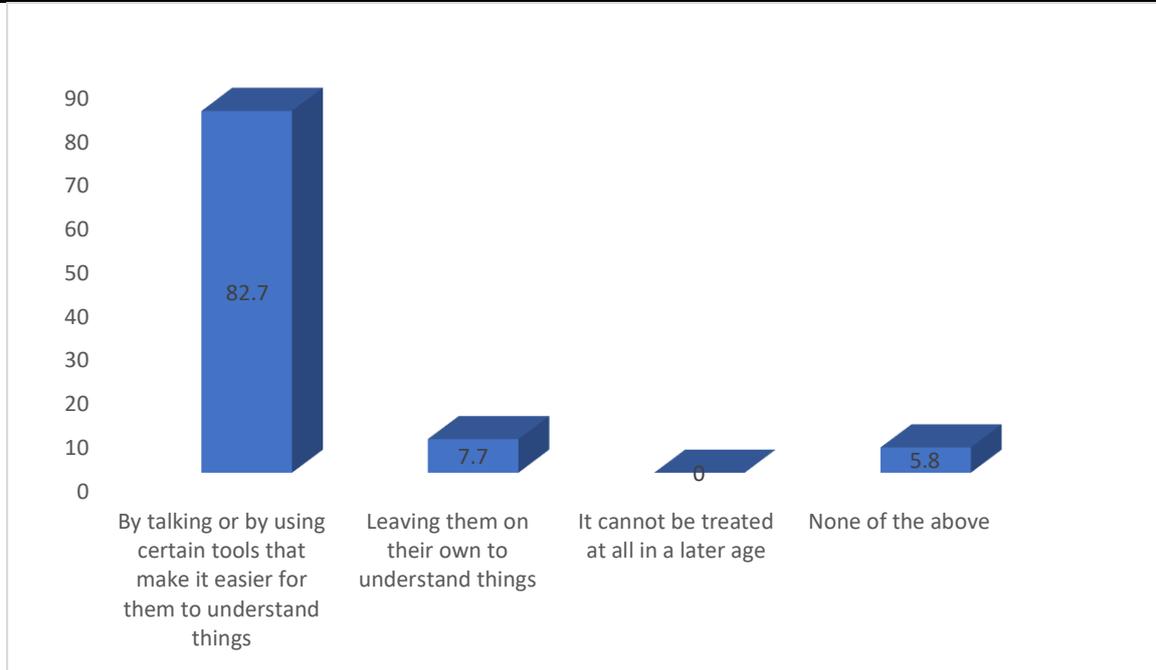


Table 6

Source – Survey

This graph represents the how can people help an adult who is having learning disability. The response from 52 people revealed that by talking or by using certain kinds of tools that make it easier for them to understand things with 82.7%, while 7.7% people consider leaving them on their own to understand things and lastly 5.8% people assumes that no methods can help them. Though it is seen that talking to them could be very helpful and can also motivate them to understand things on their own ends.

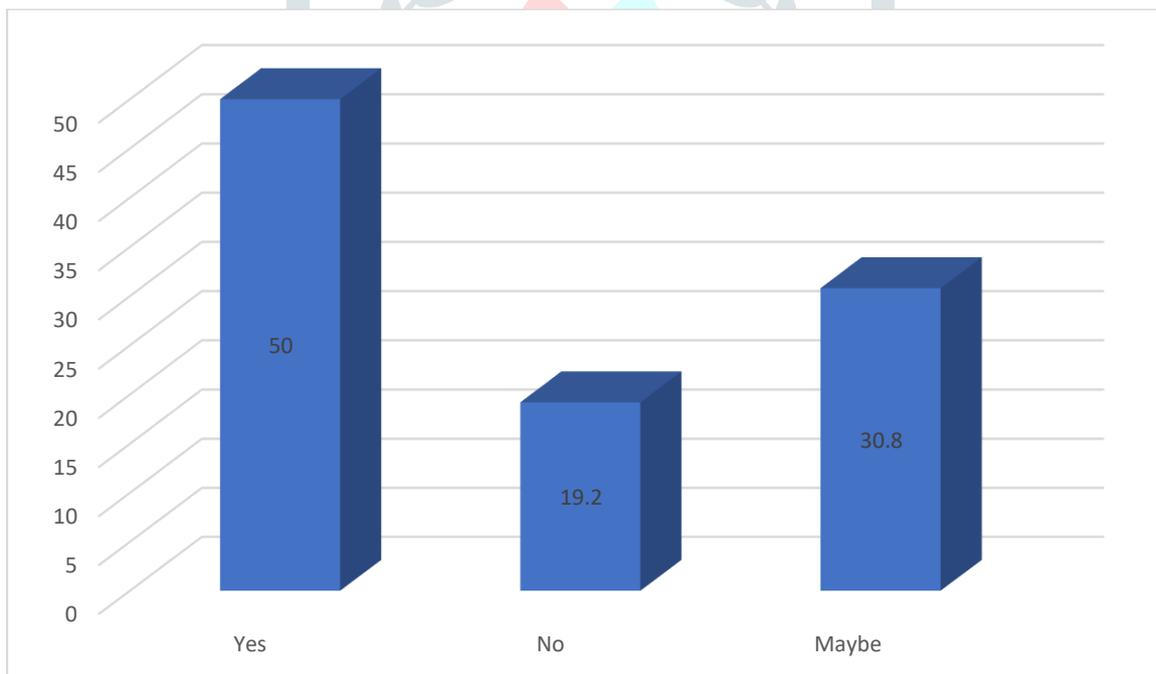


Table 7

Source – Survey

This graph represents the data about if children with learning disability are at higher risk of developing mental problems. And the response from 52 people revealed 50% people think children are more prone to developing mental problems while 19.2% assumes they are not prone to develop any kind of mental problems. Lastly, 30.8% people think that maybe they are at higher risk though they are not sure. Children with learning disability are at high risk to experience mental problems because of various factors and many times people presumes learning disability with mental health though mental health problems can be cured while learning disability cannot.

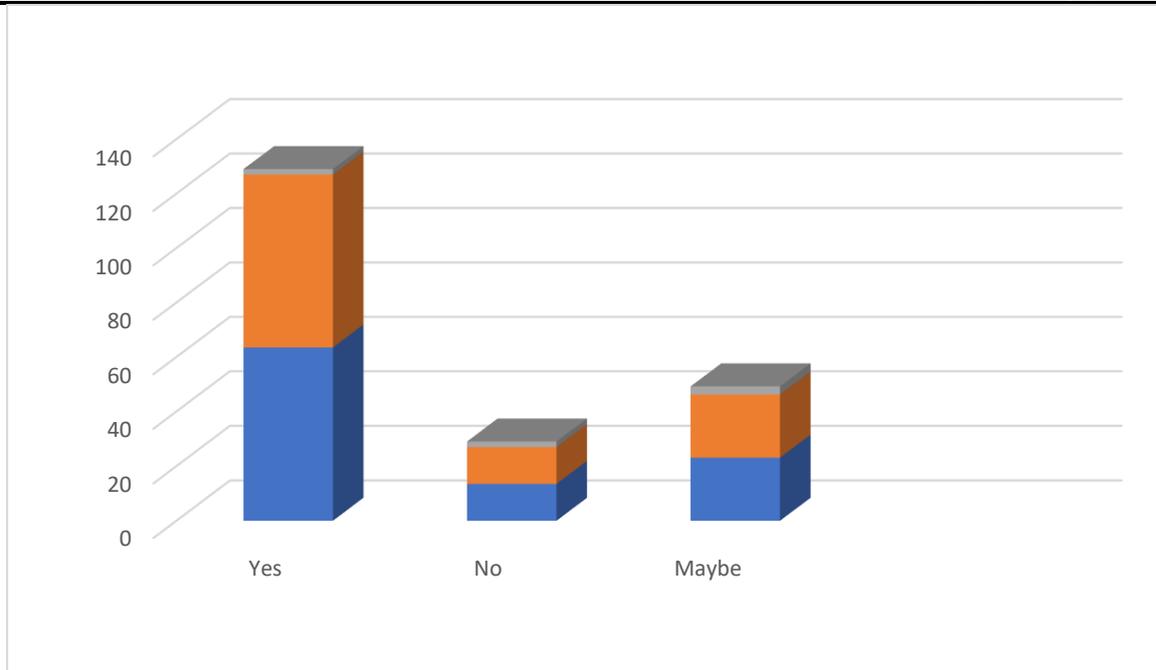


Table 8

Source – Survey

This graph represents the about the learning disability can be curable. And the response from 52 people revealed that 65.3% people assume it is curable, 13.5% it is not curable and lastly, 23.1% people assume maybe it is curable though they are not sure completely. In fact, the learning disability is not curable though through intervention and support from parents, family, teachers and school can achieve success like their fellow being.

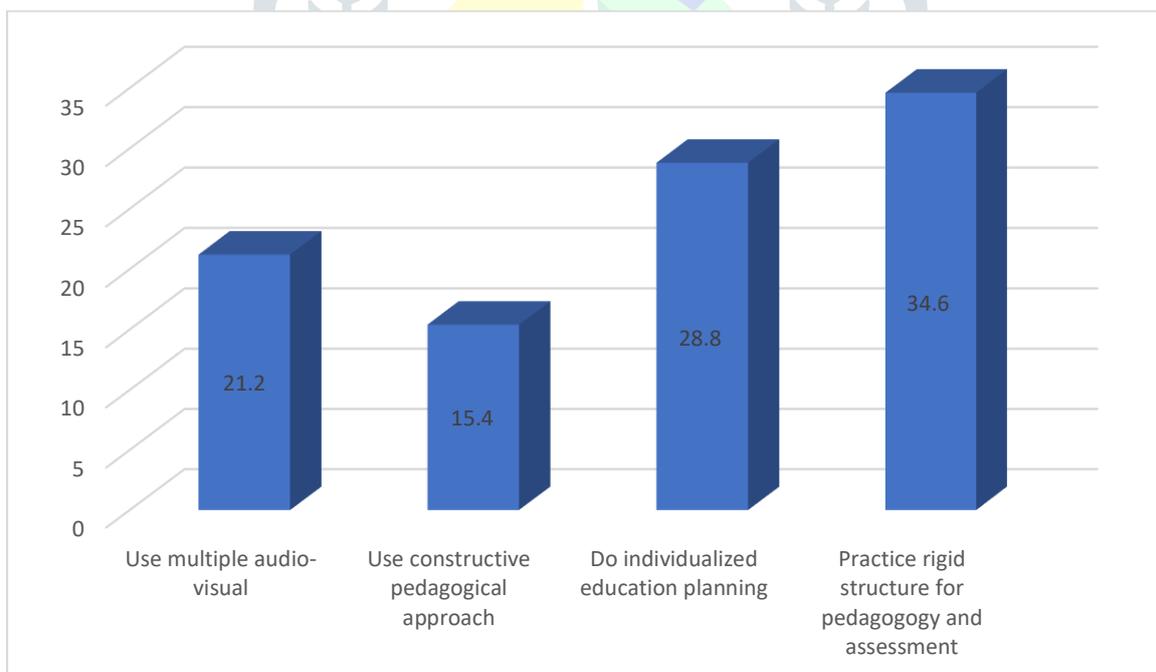
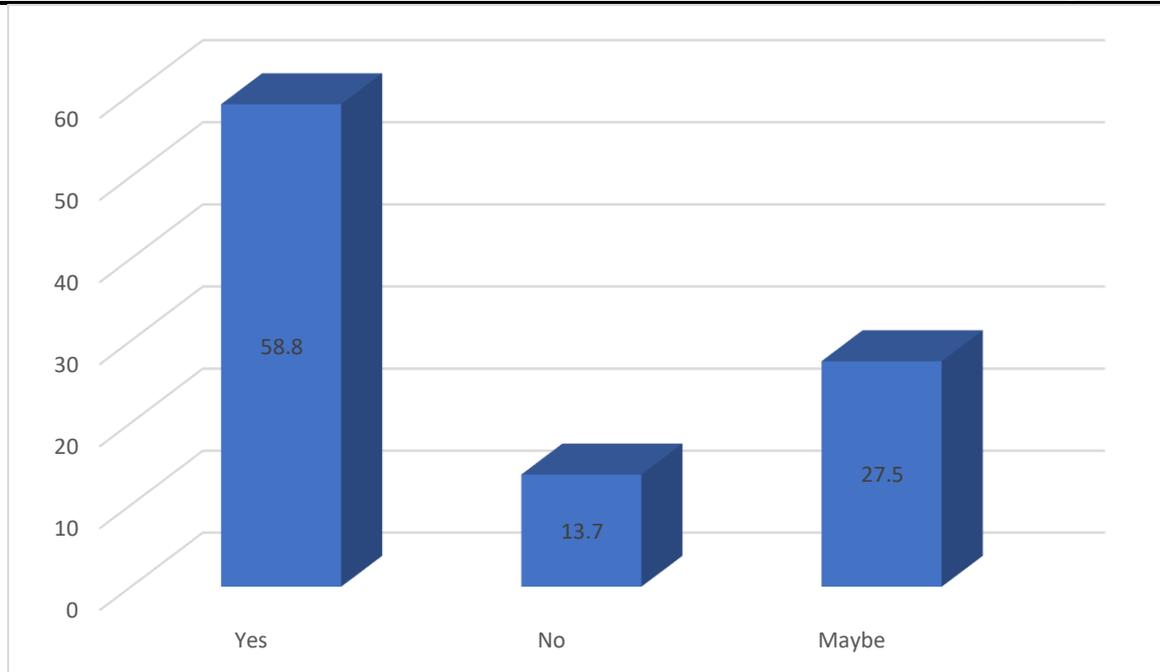


Table 9

Source – Survey

This graph represents, how a teacher should not address the needs of student facing learning disability. The response from 52 people revealed that 21.2% people assume teacher should not use multiple audio – visual aids, secondly, 15.4% people assume teacher should not use constructive pedagogical approach, thirdly, 28.8% consider teacher should not do individualized education planning and lastly, 34.6% consider teacher should not practice rigid structure for pedagogy and assessment. In reality, if any teachers should always prefer to do individualized education planning, they should also use audio – visuals aid because it helps them understand concept rather just listening and doing assessment. This method is more helpful for the children facing learning disability.

**Table 10****Source – Survey**

This graph represents whether learning disability affects a child's mental health. And the response from 52 people revealed that 58.8% people assume it does, while 13.7% assume it does not affect and lastly, 27.5% assume it can maybe. In fact, learning disability can really affect the mental health of children due to various factors according to response from the survey people think it does the children fear of being left behind always stays with them. Secondly, also because they feel inferior to others and thought of suicide come to their mind, thirdly, because they cannot learn like others, it may create a doubt in the individual which may lead to some kind of stress and anxiety or depression. It also affects the day – to day life routine, etc. that is why people, parents, teachers, peer group should not neglect them and they feel not loved and their presence is not needed. So, firstly acceptance can lead to positive thinking on that particular child.

**Table 11****Source – Survey**

This graph represents the data about the term Dyslexia mainly what this term refers to and the response from 52 people revealed that 11.5% assume it is difficulty in doing maths, 51.9% people assume it is difficulty with language and 36.5% people assume it is difficulty in sound comprehension. In fact, it is related to difficulty in sound comprehension. It also shows that people are not really aware about this learning disability.

By conducting this, survey it is very much clear that people are not really aware about this disability and pay less attention to this disorder. As in this survey questionnaire there were certain questions where it was asked is autism learning disability and majority of the people said yes though it is not. Another question was what is dyslexia and people were not really aware with this little information.

So, the point is to intervene or analyze certain disorder it is very essential to be aware regarding that particular issue. This is where people lack. That is why awareness is needed.

4. **MYTHS ABOUT LEARNING DISABILITY**

- Specific learning disability result of poor a poor diet:

In reality, it has nothing to do with any kind of external factor it is something related to brain disorder.

- Smart students don't have specific learning disability
The disorder has also nothing to with IQ of student because there are many students who get troubles in reading, writing and mathematics though they successful in life and are inspiration.
- If any child having trouble in school, is it possible if he/she having learning disability
Firstly, no one should take that decision while assuming thing. It can only be identified by conducting an educational evaluation. Anyone can conduct this test by the help of any public school or by appointing an instructor or private evaluator.

CONCLUSION

The specific learning disability is a set of neurodevelopmental disorder which hamper the growth and development of a school – going child in terms of academics. Despite of attending regular classes and having same intelligence the children who suffered from this disorder could not perform well in academics. It is because these children encounter various issues in terms of understanding letters, concept; further, because these students have difficulties in monitoring of psychological processes like lack of attention, logical thinking, their memory power is weak and so forth. Moreover, before coming to the conclusion like why this happens which children one this exclude some developmental disorder like they are mentally retarded, due to hearing or vision impairment or factors like abuse, poor – schooling, due to lack of motivation and so forth. These are not the factors for this disorder rather it happens due to reason like during pregnancy, intake of drugs by mother while she is pregnant, poor growth of uterus or due to premature or prolonged labor. Further, the learning disability is divided into three category which are – reading, writing and mathematics. The children face a lot of trouble in these areas in their academics and perform poor in examination. And it also affects their mental health and cognitive development. Though it is not a curable disorder but the risk can be reduced by intervention. Talking about intervention it very important to recognize the condition of a child because sooner they recognize sooner the specialist can intervene and start the procedure. And for teachers and school firstly, the awareness is really essential to intervene. Secondly, the school should arrange a special educator and organize special class for specific learning disability children and provide them enough knowledge or required knowledge they need to excel in life and achieve their dreams.

REFERENCE

- Introductory Module on Learning Disability – <https://www.samarthanam.org>
- Specific Learning Disability – <https://egyankosh.ac.in>
- Modeling the Learning Disability in student population by R. Jamuna – www.ijcseonline.org
- Learning disorders: know the signs, how help by Mayo Clinic Staff – <https://www.mayoclinic.org>
- Managing Specific Learning Disability in schools in India by S Karande – <https://www.indianpediatrics.net>
- What is a Specific Learning Disability? | Symptoms and Strategies – <https://www.churchillstl.org>