

# DYSLEXIA – A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

ATHIKA M.I

Student, SANA MODEL SCHOOL, CHENNAI

## Abstract

Dyslexia is often characterised by difficulty in reading and writing while the brighter side includes astounding capabilities of the individual. If an individual is impaired in some areas of intelligence they are immensely talented in some other.

## Introduction

Dyslexia is a learning disability. It is a condition that interferes with a person's ability to receive, store, process, retrieve and use info. The problem in dyslexia is a linguistic one and in no way arises from any lack of intelligence. In fact, people with severe dyslexia can be brilliant. The world population has a 5-20% of dyslexics.

Dyslexia is often called Specific Learning Disability (SLD) because it can exist in individuals who are otherwise of average or above average ability. Being neurological in origin Dyslexia can go undetected in the formative years of schooling. Research indicates that 10-15% of the children may suffer from some type of dyslexia. (International Dyslexia Assn.)

## Causes

Dyslexia can be caused due to various reasons like,

1. It is clear that dyslexia is very frequently found in families. As stated earlier Dyslexia has a Neurobiological and genetic basis. Two factors in the brain to be considered are
  - An underutilized left hemisphere
  - The problem involving the central bridge of the tissue in the brain called the *corpus callosum*.
2. Orton (pioneer in focusing attention on reading failure and related language processing difficulties) attributes that reversals (b, d) and mirror imaging disorders of orientation, ambidexterity to incomplete hemispherical dominance of the brain.
3. If a child suffers frequent colds and throat infections in the first five years of childhood could develop a condition known as glue ear which causes delay in acquiring speech and language skills.
4. Maybe due to birth traumas.(Teacher Training Manual on Dyslexia byMDA)

*“I have no doubt it [Dyslexia] is due to some congenital defect” says Mr. Pringle Morgan, British ophthalmologist.*

## IMPACTS

- Children with dyslexia were slower in reaching their milestones
- Anxiety, Anger, depression- very much prevalent.
- Below grade level reading, language, spelling skills.
- Attention problems.
- Disorganized thinking.
- Hyper activity.

In 1896, British ophthalmologist W.Pringle Morgan described a 14 year old child named Percy who despite receiving 7 years of the greatest efforts to teach him read, could only read at the most basic level, even though his school masters believed that he was the smartest lad in school if it was entirely oral. (The Dyslexia Handbook- 1996)

It was through this case, the concept of dyslexia was developed and the idea that there exists a distinct group of individuals who- though clearly intelligent – learn and process certain kinds of information very different from their peers.

*“The dual nature of dyslexia is what’s amazing and confusing...”*

*~ The Dyslexic Advantage (2011)*

Even though Percy was at the most basic level in reading and writing, he did arithmetic sums like multiplying very swiftly. It was this behaviour of dyslexia scientists found very difficult to decipher. The boy who did math sums very well could only perform activities like reading and writing at the lowest level possible.

Lingering thoughts arise in our minds like “Is it because of the English language?”“Is dyslexia caused only in the language of English?”

Actually, it is said that dyslexia is more common among English and French speakers than in Italians. It is because the English language is made up of just

*40 sounds but can be spelt in more than 1000 different ways but, in Italian the language’s 25 sounds are made up in just 33 ways. (source - [news.bbc.co.uk>uk\\_news>education](http://news.bbc.co.uk>uk_news>education))*

Maybe the English languages complexity increases the rate of dyslexics. Comparing to dyslexics in various countries, it is said that English speaking dyslexics experienced far more problems with reading and writing.

The understanding of Dyslexia exploded in the 1990s after the availability of *functional brain imaging (fMRI)*, a technology that allows scientists to observe brain at work as a person reads, speaks or processes phonological features of the language. While watching the brain images of volunteers as they attempted to transcribe letters into sounds, NIH scientists found conclusive evidences that the areas in the brain that process written *info work differently in people with dyslexia*. The identifications of these pathways may lead to more effective interventions. (source-www.Idonline.org)

### *Dyslexia in a Different Perspective*

Dyslexia can't be viewed only as a matter of disadvantage over reading and writing. Even though, the dyslexics struggle in the areas of reading and writing, they are immensely skilled and more creative in various fields.

Great personalities like Leonardo Da Vinci who painted the famous Mona Lisa, Walt Disney who built the Disney Empire, Albert Einstein – one of the most influential physicists in History, Sally Gardner – writer and illustrator who received awards, John F. Kennedy, George Washington, George Bush – The Presidents of United States, Picasso – World renowned artist and even Muhammad Ali – World famous Boxer WERE ALL DYSLEXIC! These are the great personalities of the world who had Learning Difficulties! But that didn't stop them to reach the pinnacle of the world...

They are the examples that even when the World branded them as Dyslexics they had the courage, the sheer determination that made them who they were...

These aren't just mere coincidences; those who have dyslexia are bound to have a higher IQ.

*“The challenges of dyslexia are only a piece of a much larger picture”*

*~The Dyslexic Advantage (2011)*

Dyslexic processing also predisposes individuals to important abilities, many mental functions, including,

- 3-D spatial reasoning and mechanical ability
- The ability to perceive relationships like analogies, metaphors, paradoxes, similarities, differences, implications, gaps and imbalances
- The ability to remember important personal experiences and to understand abstract information in terms of specific examples.
- The ability to perceive and take advantage of subtle patterns in complex shifting and data sets.

- While the precise nature and extent of these abilities varies from person to person there are enough similarities to form a recognizable set which can be legitimately referred to as the “*The Dyslexic Advantage*”

~*The Dyslexic Advantage {2011}*

### *Teaching Methodologies*

Chalk and talk method of teaching is out dated these days. For the children to learn more we have to devise and strategize new ways of teaching so that they show interest in learning. There are various methods of teaching. They are as follows,

Many individuals with dyslexia need one-on-one help so that they can move forward at their own pace.

*Multi-sensory learning* is the method which involves the use of visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic-tactile pathways simultaneously to enhance memory and learning of written language. (dyslexiaida.org)

Commonly known as **VAKT**, which stands for **V**isual, **A**uditory, **K**inaesthetic, or **T**actile.

First the teacher has to decide which of these skills is dominant so that he/she can decide which teaching method is more suitable for the child, because of this child is also eager to learn...

### *Using Multiple Intelligences in teaching:*

*Howard Gardner* is the proponent of the theory of multiple intelligences. He believed it is not just an **IQ** score that measures a child's intelligence but many areas where they can excel. The various intelligences are:

- Verbal Intelligence
- Logical-Mathematical
- Bodily-Kinesthetic
- Spatial
- Musical
- Interpersonal
- Intra personal
- Naturalistic

### *Brain Gym:*

Brain Gym is about body movements which have been designed to get the two hemispheres of the brain to work together. When our brains become balanced, it helps in many things from speeding up your reading, increasing creativity, to boosting self-

esteem. Brain Gym is part of “*Educational Kinesiology*”, a system which was developed by Dr Paul Dennison. He found that very simple body movements could help to improve brain function. Research has shown that there has been a good effect on reading, spelling, motor skills, eye coordination etc. The Lazy 8, Cross Crawl, Thinking caps, Hook ups, Double Doodle is particularly useful with children. (Source -Teacher training manual on Dyslexia by MDA)

### *Accommodations:*

Children with SLD are given a lot of accommodations in the West, extra time is allotted for tests, use of word processor is permitted and for the students who have board copying and writing problems they are given photocopied notes.

In India, in Board Examination level Dyslexia has been recognized as a problem and the following provisions are being provided.

- Extra Time to complete the exam
- Marking for content and overlooking spelling and grammatical errors.
- Dropping of a second language- are some of the provisions.(Source -Teacher training manual on Dyslexia by MDA).

*Accommodations make it possible for students with dyslexia to demonstrate their learning abilities without being hindered...(www.dyslexiaida.org)*

### **Conclusion**

Even though dyslexia can be viewed as a matter of disadvantage it is important to note that everything has its pros and cons. There is also a brighter side of Dyslexia, “*the mental function that causes dyslexia is a GIFT in the truest sense of the word: a natural ability, a talent. It is something that enhances the individual*”. (dyslexia.com). Everyone always view dyslexia as a disadvantage but what I am trying to say through this journal is Dyslexia is a blessing in disguise, it is said Dyslexics can easily grasp the sophisticated ideas than simple ones easily. Dyslexia is not a disability it's just that people with dyslexia are different and unique. It is also said that 60% of the self-made millionaires are dyslexic! Though it is necessary for a child to get assessed so that the child can receive the appropriate instruction and accommodations he/ she needs to succeed in school. Happy Learning!

## References

1. MDA “Teacher Training Manual on Dyslexia” .
2. International Dyslexia Association (<https://dyslexiaida.org>)
3. Brock Eide and FernetteEide The Dyslexic Advantage : Unlocking the Hidden Potential of the Dyslexic Brain (2011)
4. British Dyslexia Association “The Dyslexia Handbook” ,1996
5. [www.dyslexia.com](http://www.dyslexia.com)
6. Other sources-Internet

