



# CAUSES OF SLOW LEARNING IN CHILDREN

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## Abstract

Learners with lesser level of cognitive ability who require additional academic support to grasp new concepts and who take more time than their peers to understand and retain information may be classified as slow learners in certain contexts. These students may struggle with grasping concepts, retaining information, and applying knowledge in practical situations. It is essential for teachers to be fully aware of the challenges faced by slow learners, as they play a critical role in the teaching-learning process. By recognizing these difficulties early and adapting instructional strategies accordingly, teachers can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that meets the diverse needs of all students. This is a secondary data based study focusing on causes of slow learning. Illness, lack of parental care, lack of proper facilities to learn, lack of confidence in goal achievement, extreme timidity, anxiety etc. are some of the causes of slow learning.

## Keywords:

Slow learning, causes, children

## I. Introduction

Learners with a lesser level of cognitive ability seeking additional academic support to grasp new concept and thereby taking more time than the ordinary students in understanding a concept and having unique educational needs can be considered as slow learners in certain cases (Judy & Vardhan, 2025). Slow learners belong to children who have both special needs with below normal rate intellectual capacity and difficulties in understanding a lesson. The teachers need to be aware of the difficulties faced by the students as they play a significant role in the teaching learning process. Teachers should have an appropriate approach to improve their teaching practice on regular basis (Sovia & Herman, 2019). By providing required educational opportunities the educational status of the slow learners can be improved to make them successful learners and also efficient nation builders in the future (Koirkana, 2020).

## II. Review of related literature

Vasudevan, A. (2017) conducted a study entitled 'Slow learners – Causes, problems and educational programmes'. The study found that low intellectual abilities like subnormal intelligence, personal factors such as long illness, long absence from school, undetected physical defects, environmental variables such as poor facilities for learning, low quality and quantity of food, shortage of sleep, adverse parental attitudes towards education, poor or inappropriate opportunities in school, poor quality of teaching, choosing inadequate or advanced materials, incompatibility between home and the school, repeated changes of school and consequent changes in teaching styles and content and emotional factors such as negative parental attitudes to school, feeling of inadequacy, lack of self-confidence, extreme timidity and anxiety giving rise to poor levels of attainment etc. are some of the causes of slow learning.

Salomi.D.S.& Sundaram, A.M.(2018) in their study on 'Slow Learning - Causes, Problems and Solutions' mentions that short attention span, defective vision and health problem are some of the causes of slow learning. This study also mentions that when parents have no time for their child, the child may feel unsecured and isolated and if the child can not share his or her problems that he or she faces in the school and is to keep everything in his or her mind then the child may develop hatred towards education and school. According to this study violence and showing partiality in schools is another cause for slow learning due to which the child develops hatred towards the teacher and withdraws his or her studies because caning the students psychologically affects the learning abilities of children leading to emotional problems and aggression, which

affects the cognitive abilities. Parental pressure and overprotective attitude of parents also may sometime cause slow learning according to this study. Experiencing too much unpleasant emotions, not receiving affection, lack of proper care etc. also may cause slow learning in certain cases.

Sovia, A., & Herman, T. (2019) conducted a study on 'Slow learner errors analysis in solving integer problems in elementary school' and found that slow learners tended to face problems in interpreting mathematical problems, developing problem solving strategy, using appropriate operation, and also in making conclusion. The result of the analysis was expected to give input to mathematics teachers to prepare appropriate teaching practice for slow learners in studying mathematics, especially in integer operation problems.

Haloi, S. (2019) conducted a study entitled 'A Study on Slow Learners with Special Reference to the Schools of Tihu area, Nalbari District, Assam' and found that various problems can affect the life of students. The study also found that most of the students between age group of 12/13 are slow learners and some slow learners were found to sit in the last rows of the classes.

Koirkana, A. (2020) conducted a study on 'Slow learners – A universal problem and providing educational opportunities to them to be a successful learner'. This study mentions that slow learning is caused by a variety of factors such as environmental factors, emotional factors, personal factors etc. The environmental factors include poor home conditions for learning, poor or inappropriate school opportunities, poor quality of teaching, low quality, and quantity of food, shortage of sleep, adverse parental attitudes towards education, incompatibility between home and the school, frequent changes of school and consequent changes in teaching styles and content. Some of the emotional factors mentioned in this study are negative parental attitudes to school, feeling of inadequacy, lack of confidence in goal achievement, extreme timidity and anxiety giving rise to poor levels of attainment etc. This study also mentions about some personal factors like long illness, long absence from school, undetected physical defects etc.

Kumari, A. & Vyas. C. (2020) mention in their study on 'Challenges Faced by Slow Learners in Mathematics at Primary Level of Education' the reasons behind incompetency of slow learners in mathematics are the result of limitation of child's own cognitive abilities and problems in his/her outside world such as school, teachers and parents and the nature of the subject itself. There is a strong need of rethinking on pedagogical strategies followed by teachers dealing a variety of learners in inclusive classrooms. This study mentions that the educators need to look for remedial strategies which may be incorporated within the traditional teaching methods or the remedial strategies that may be used alone.

According to Sultana, R. Sk. (2022) low intellectual abilities such as subnormal intelligence, long illness, physical defects, poor cognitive characteristics, long absence from school, shortage of sleep, extreme anxiety, lack of confidence, negative attitude of parents towards school, non-conducive home environment, poor quality food, student unrest, social disturbances, poor quality of teaching etc. are some of the causes of slow learning.

Mahanty, S. (2023) conducted a study on 'Identification of problems of slow learners with special reference to English subject' and found that most of the slow learners don't get an opportunity to interact with the English teacher during teaching learning process as a result they don't take participation. More than half of the slow learners don't have interest in learning English subject. It was also disclosed that the slow learners need to be introduced to some concrete concepts which can be possible by proper use of TLMs related to English subject and teaching methods.

Wanabuliandari, S., Wardono, Susilo.B.E., Bintoro,H.S. & Mariani, S. (2025) conducted a study entitled 'A Systematic Literature Review on Slow Learners' Problem-Solving in Mathematics Education which examines the challenges faced by slow learners in the problem-solving process in mathematics education, emphasizing the importance of a holistic and adaptive approach. The findings of the study indicate that slow learners can benefit from various strategies, including constructivist approaches, Polya's problem solving framework, scaffolding, and the use of technology-based learning media which can improve slow learners' problem-solving and also help these children deepen their understanding, learn with real experiences, and build confidence in solving mathematics problems.

Judy J.T. & Vardhan, V. (2025) conducted a study on 'Identifying and Motivating Slow Learners in English Classroom' and it is mentioned in their study that a child who is labelled as a slow learner may face numerous challenges throughout his or her life. The children considered as slow learners may struggle to keep up with their peers, struggle to stay motivated while learning, experience frequent bouts of depression or anxiety, or struggle to communicate and connect with others. The slow learning ability results in a knowledge gap in basic concepts and skills, as well as decreased comprehension ability across a wide range of academic areas which may develop a negative self image amongst the slow learners.

### III. Objectives of the study:

1. To study the causes of slow learning in children.

### IV. Methodology of the study:

#### IV.1 Sources of data

To meet the objectives of this study the investigator used secondary sources like books, journals etc. and e-material from internet such e-journals and different free educational website.

### V. Limitations of the study:

- a. The study is delimited to secondary data only.

### VI. Discussion

#### Causes of slow learning

There are different causes behind slow learning which may not be same for all. The causes need immediate attention of the stakeholders for the improvement of the slow learners. Different factors may cause slow learning in children. Some of the significant factors causing slow learning are:

#### I. Physical factors

- **Poor Nutrition**

Lack of essential nutrients affects brain development and function. Iron deficiency, undernourishment etc. may lead to fatigue, poor concentration, and memory issues in a child.

- **Sleep Deprivation**

Inadequate or poor-quality sleep disrupts cognitive functioning. Trouble focusing, irritability, slowed thinking. Sleep deprivation may reduce attention, memory consolidation, and problem-solving skills.

- **Chronic Illness**

Ongoing physical health problems can distract from or interfere with learning. Asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, frequent infections may hinder in attending school regularly.

- **Sensory Impairments**

Difficulty in seeing or hearing can limit access to instructional content. Due to poor vision, hearing problems, partial blindness or deafness etc. learners may not fully perceive lessons or written materials and thereby may cause delay in learning.

- **Lack of Physical Activity**

Low activity levels can reduce brain oxygenation and energy. Lack of recess or play or other physical exercises may have adverse effect in physical growth and development of a child.

#### II. Emotional factors

- **Lack of Motivation**

Limited interest or internal drive to learn or succeed academically may cause boredom, feeling disconnected from content, being absent minded etc. in children may lead to poor performance and slow progress in certain cases.

- **Anxiety**

Excessive worry, especially during performance or in social situations like test anxiety, fear of speaking in class, separation anxiety etc. may lead to lack of concentration, memory block, and avoidance of tasks etc. causing slow learning.

- **Depression**

Persistent sadness, loss of interest, and low energy are also some of the causes of lack of participation in learning process properly.

- **Stress and Trauma**

Emotional distress from home or school experiences due to domestic violence, loss of a loved one, bullying, and neglect may lead to difficulty in focusing on learning process and thereby causing slow learning.

- **Lack of Emotional Support**

Children may feel unsafe or unloved due to lack of emotional support from parents, teachers, friends etc. which may reduce their willingness to take academic risks or try new tasks.

- **Negative Feedback**

Negative feedback and lack of encouragement from parents, teachers, friends etc. may undermine confidence and build resistance to learning in a child.

### III. Environmental factors

- **Home Environment**

The overall atmosphere and support at home from family members play a significant role in the learning process of a child. Family is considered as the first social agency and parents as the first teachers in the life of a child. Lack of minimum facilities to learn and also limited parental involvement may cause slow learning in some children.

- **School Environment**

School is considered as the temple of learning for a child. Ineffective or unsupportive learning conditions like large class sizes, lack of qualified teachers, biased attitude of teachers, outdated materials etc. may lead to slow learning in some cases.

- **Peer Influence**

Teasing, exclusion, or pressure to underperform can damage self-esteem of a child leading to avoidance of school or withdrawal from learning activities.

- **Language Barriers**

If the home language differs from the language of instruction in the school then some children may participate in the teaching learning process in a limited way leading to vocabulary delays causing slow learning.

- **Unsafe or Unstable Environment**

Constant fear or lack of security due to violence, displacement, or neglect etc. may stand as barrier in focusing on learning.

### VII. Conclusion

Identifying the causes of slow learning is crucial for promoting effective teaching and meaningful educational outcomes in an inclusive way. A clear understanding of these causes benefits a wide range of stakeholders including researchers, educators, parents, guardians, school administrators, and policymakers. For educators and families, it allows for the design of tailored interventions that address learners' specific needs. For policymakers, it informs the development and implementation of responsive, inclusive, and equitable educational policies. By recognizing and addressing these underlying factors, stakeholders can create targeted strategies that enhance the teaching-learning process and ensure that no learner is left behind.

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