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## Identification of Specific Learning Disability

**Dr. B. K. Pal**

Associate Professor (Psychology)

District Institute of Education and Training,

Karkardooma, Delhi -110092

State Council of Educational Research and Training (Government of NCT of Delhi)

Email: [drbkpal@gmail.com](mailto:drbkpal@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract:**

*Right to development to education, care, leisure, recreation, cultural activities, and right to participation to express, are the fundamental rights of children suffering from SLD. The term learning disorder casts a wide range net by encompassing all disorders that cause a deficit in the functioning of the developing brain. Classification of disorders of psychological development has been discussed in the detail. The prevalence of SLD has also been discussed. Areas affected by SLD indicate learning disabilities of school-going children like problems with reading, the problem reading with comprehension, the problem with writing, problems with mathematical operations, and other difficulties noted in the children with SLD emphasized and elaborated with suitable examples. This article will be helpful for teachers, teacher educators, special educators, rehabilitation professionals, B.Ed., M.Ed., D.El.Ed. Students and research scholars as well.*

### **Introduction and Definition of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Learning Disability (LD):**

It is a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and the use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability.

Although LD may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (e.g., cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of these

conditions or influences.

### Terminologies:

- Learning Disability, Specific Learning Disability, Dyslexia  
Vs
- Learning Disorders, Learning Impairment

The term learning disorder casts a wider net by encompassing all disorders that cause a persistent deficit in the function of the developing brain.

The term includes mental retardation and acquired disorders (e.g., traumatic brain injury) as well as difficulties with fine motor coordination (dysgraphia, dyspraxia), modulation of sensory modalities (i.e., tactile defensiveness, hyperacusis), social cognition (autism spectrum disorders) Children who have attention deficit disorder without associated learning disabilities also are included.

### Classification of Disorders of Psychological Development:

- Specific Developmental Disorders of Speech and Language
  - > Specific Speech Articulation Disorder
  - > Expressive Language Disorder
  - > Receptive Language Disorder
- Specific Developmental Disorders of Scholastic Skills
  - > Specific Reading Disorder
  - > Specific Spelling Disorder
  - > Specific Disorder of Arithmetical Skills
  - > Mixed Disorder of Scholastic Skills
  - > Other Developmental Disorders of Scholastic Skills
  - > Developmental Disorder of Scholastic Skills, Unspecified
- Specific Developmental Disorder of Motor Function
- Mixed Specific Developmental Disorders

### DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association):

- Reading Disorder
- Mathematics Disorder
- Disorder of Written Language
- Expressive Language Disorder
  - > Mixed Expressive-Receptive Language Disorder
  - > Phonological Disorder
- Developmental Coordination Disorder

### Prevalence of Specific Learning Disability in India:

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), estimates academic related difficulties in the child and adolescent population are 18-20 percent. Cultural factors affect the specificity and sensitivity of epidemiology studies. Prevalence rates for the reading disorder are estimated at 4 percent of school-age children, the prevalence rate of mathematics disorder has not been well evaluated; a range of 1 to 6 percent of grade school-age children is quoted in several studies. Written expression is thought to occur in from 2 to 8 percent of school-age children. However, on all accounts, the overall load of the problem is enormous.

### Areas Affected by Specific Learning Disability:

Milestones, gross motor skills, speech and language skills, academic skills, cognitive skills, attention, memory, behavior, and overall personal social development are all affected in some way or the other if a child has a specific learning disability. Hence, the need for its early recognition and effective management.

### Indicators of Learning Disability in School-going Children:

SLD causes a lack of academic skills in the following areas:

- Reading/Reading Comprehension
- Writing /Spelling
- Mathematics

They are good in oral, but poor in written work and the mothers often lament that “My child would have been the smartest lad in the school if the instructions and evaluation are entirely oral”.

### Problems with Reading:

- Reads very slowly and word by word.
- Constantly loses place, missing outlines, or reading the same line again.
- Therefore needs to always keep a finger below the line being read
- Hesitates to read aloud
- Hates reading and refuses to read
- May try to sound out the individual elements of the word
- But is often unable to synthesize it into the correct word eg; b/e/g and then say bad
- Ignores punctuation, thus often confusing the meaning of the text
- Confusion with alphabet, shapes, and positions

b as d

u as n

w as m

- Confusion in words

on - no

was - saw

felt - left

act - cat

➤ Omission

bet for belt

wet for went

➤ Addition

played for play

useful for use

➤ Substitution

house for home

guess for guest

➤ Mispronounces some words such as:-

help for held

portion for position

horse for house

➤ Puts syllables in the wrong order

animal as aminal

hospital as hopsital

Gopalakrishnan as Golapakrishnan

**Problems with Reading with Comprehension:**

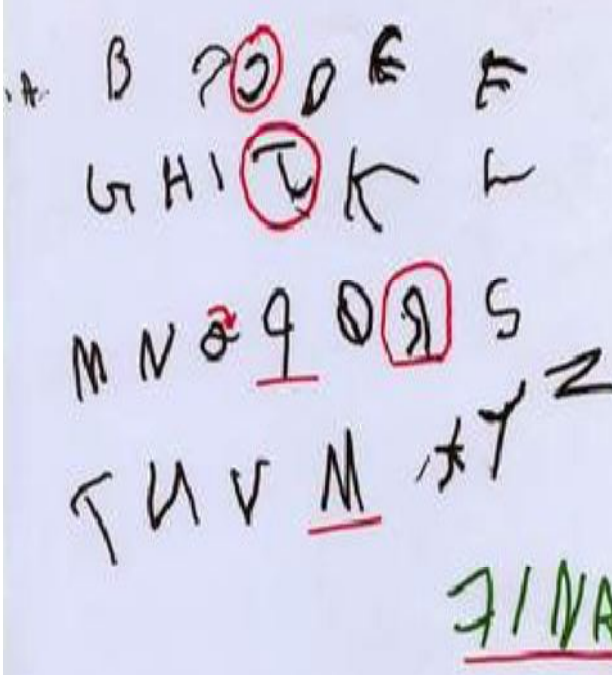
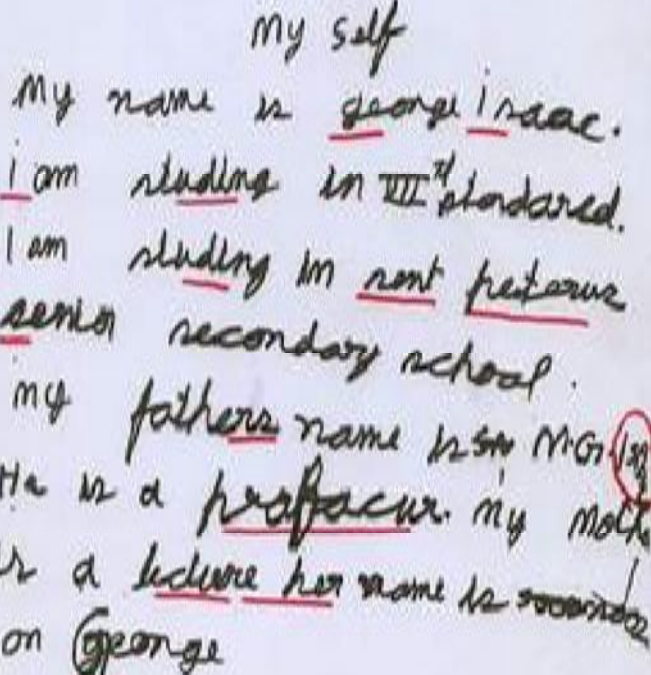
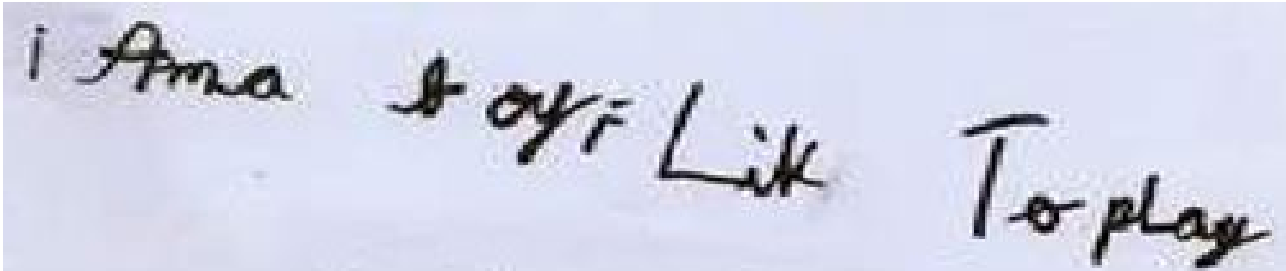
- Difficulty in reading and understanding questions
- If we read out the question, the child can answer
- Cannot make head or tail of text when reading
- Understands and learns better if someone reads out the same text to the child

**Problems with Writing:**

- Abnormal grip makes writing slow and laborious
- Notes are incomplete and do not make sense.
- Poor in remembering the certain alphabet
- Unable to copy from the board
- Shows mirror writing
- Write letters in the wrong order e.g.,  
Simon as Siomn,  
what as wtah
- Inconsistent errors/sometimes correct spelling e.g.,

apple, appel, aple

- Reverses letters and words e.g.,  
b as d, p as q, was as saw
- Inverts letters e.g.,  
n-u, m-w, d-q, p-b, f-t
- Omits letters e.g.,  
limp as lip, string as sing
- Adds letters e.g.,  
went as whent,  
what as whant
- Spells the way the word sounds  
BUSY as BIZZY  
NEIGHBOUR as NABER  
LIGHT as LITE

7-years old writing of alphabets (ABCD)	Poor organization of ideas and sentence structure
 <p>A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z <u>ZINA</u></p>	 <p>my self my name is <u>george isaac</u>. i am <u>studing</u> in <u>III<sup>rd</sup></u> <u>standard</u>. I am <u>studing</u> in <u>rent</u> <u>primary</u> <u>senior</u> <u>secondary</u> school. my <u>father's</u> name is <u>Mr. G. Isaac</u> He is a <u>professor</u>. my <u>mother</u> is a <u>lecturer</u> her name is <u>...</u> on <u>George</u></p>
Weak in punctuation, capitalization and has an illegible handwriting	
 <p>I Ama boy Lik To play</p>	

These children also have poor ideas when required to compose an essay.

### Problem with Mathematics:

- Uses fingers for calculations even after 8 years.
- Has difficulty with multiplication tables.
- Confuses the basic 4 operations. +, -, ×, ÷
- Has difficulty understanding statement problems, and deciding on operations.
- Understands the concept of calculation, but cannot work out on paper.
- Works out answer correctly, make mistakes while writing
- Directional problems

$$\begin{array}{r} 35 \\ + 25 \\ \hline 78 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

- Mirror writing 6 for 9
- More difficulty with subtraction and multiplication than with the addition
- Copying from a rough column to a fair sheet

Mistakes they make are not recognized by their brains however much they try

Fair Page	Rough column
544 +	544 +
432 -----	432 -----
697	976

### Other Difficulties noted in Children with SLD:

- Fine motor skills - poor pencil speed, control, and accuracy
- Employs work avoidance tactics (sharpening pencils, looking for books)
- Excessive tiredness due to concentration and effort required
- Rests head on the desk or over to one side when coloring or writing
- Frustration often leads to behavioral problems
- Rage, tantrums, verbal and physical abuse

### End Result if not Identified and given Adequate Help:

- Repeated Failure

- Rejection
- Poor Self-esteem
- Anxiety
- Disturbed
- Insecure
- Joker of the Class
- Delinquency
- School Dropouts
- Become Social Misfits

### **Not all Children with SLD will Display all these Characteristics:**

A child poor in mathematics may be excellent in languages and vice versa and that is why the term 'specific' learning disability. Three or more problems persisting in a child place the child as 'at high risk' or may indicate the presence of a specific learning disability.

### **Discrepancy Factor:**

Classically, a child who does not perform as well scholastically as would be expected when taking into consideration his better than average performance in all other fields must ring a bell in our minds that we may be dealing with a child having a specific learning disability. These children remember movies, TV programs, and music sometimes better than normal children do. They are often excellent in extra-curricular activities and are house, arts, and even school captains. Most of them are excellent with computers. Therefore, they do not get any sympathy when they fare poorly in studies and are often labeled lazy or stupid, or obstinate and punished.

### **Abbreviations:**

ICD 10: International Classification of Diseases 10

LD: Learning Disability

ICMR: Indian Council of Medical Research

SLD: Specific Learning Disability

DSM IV: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV

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